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ABSTRACT

This document contains, in chronological order, all articles related to dropouts that have appeared in the Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) Newsletter from 1986 to 1989. The articles are: (1) "The Prevention and Recovery of Dropouts: An Action Agenda" (Robledo); (2) "Coca Cola Valued Youth Partnership Program Results of Second Year Evaluation" (Cortez and Penny-Velazquez); (3) "The Texas School Dropout Project: A Summary of Findings"; (4) "Valued Youth Partnership Program: Dropout Prevention through Cross-Age Tutoring" (Sosa); (5) "Attrition Rates as Indicators of School Dropouts" (Cardenas); (6) "Undereducated Youth in Texas: A Study of Macro-Community Dropout Rates" (Waggoner); (7) "The Economic Impact of the Dropout Problem" (Ramirez and Robledo); (8) "Trustee of Education Award" (Cardenas); (9) "Dropout Legislation Passed by Texas Lawmakers" (Cortez); (10) "Dropping Out" (Rust); (11) "Educating At-Risk Children: A Top National Priority"; (12) "Impact of the Valued Youth Partnership Program" (Johnson); (13) "Formulating a Plan for Dropout Prevention" (Cardenas); (14) "The Trials and Tribulations of Learning Science and Mathematics by At-Risk Students" (Schwartz); (15) "Attrition Rates for State Schools Show Increase" (Cardenas); (16) "Partnerships with Parents and Your Community: How Adult and Community Education Can Help" (Whitney); (17) "Valued Youth Partnerships Tutors Are Honored for Helping Others Succeed"; (18) "Acceleration: The Rapidly Growing Crisis of Illiteracy in Our Modern Workplaces" (McCullough); (19) "The Innovative Approaches Research Project: Employing Research Findings to Improve Instruction for Limited English Proficient Students" (Rivera); (20) "Typology Sets the Stage for Dropout Prevention Action"; (21) "Tennessee's Government Attacks Dropout Problem with 15-Point Initiative to Focus on At-Risk Students"; (22) "AT&T Grant Awarded to IDRA for Helping At-Risk Students"; (23) "Texas Dropouts Revisited: 1989" (Cardenas); (24) "Parental Involvement: A 'Valued' Component for Children to Succeed in School" (Guzman, Montemayor, and Raisor); (25) "Parents Working for Our Valued Youth" (Ramos); (26) "IDRA Workshops for Parents of Pre-K Children" (Sosa); (27) "Communicating with Parents Via Television" (Garza); (28) "Parental Involvement Conference--A Wonderful Success" (Guzman); (29) "ASPIRA and IDRA Join Forces to Battle Dropout" (Napoles); (30) "How Do I Value You? Let Me Count the Ways" (Montemayor); (31) "Addressing School Dropouts" (Cardenas); (32) "Effective Schools: The Multicultural Perspective. A Strategy for Responding to the Needs of At-Risk Students" (Scott); and (33) "Partners for Valued Youth: Year One Progress Report" (Supik). In addition to the articles, the document contains a keyword index and information about the contributors. (NB)

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Valued Youth Anthology

Articles on Dropout Prevention

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VALUED YOUTH ANTHOLOGY

ARTICLES ON DROPOUT PREVENTION

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PREFACE

It is difficult to determine when IDRA selected school dropouts as a priority program for our organization. Most of IDRA staff have recognized this problem and been involved in dropout prevention activities throughout our professional lives. The methodology employed by IDRA in the 1986 Texas School Dropout Survey is comparable to the methodology that I developed in 1955 to estimate dropout rates in Edgewood High School.

Regardless of the date of IDRA involvement, this organization was an early participant in the identification of the problem, the determination of the magnitude, the analysis of causes and the development of prevention programs.

This anthology of articles on school dropouts serves as a valuable resource for individuals and organizations interested in addressing the needs of students and their families and providing the necessary support services for the students to complete their schooling. These articles provide summaries of extensive studies which should provide direction in the formulation of new and successful dropout prevention programs.

The printing of an anthology spanning many years of work is often a sensitive undertaking since the research findings and experiences gathered over the years tend to reshape both thinking and direction. Rather than taking exception to longitudinal inconsistencies in thought, policies and recommendations, it is hoped that the reader will appreciate how much IDRA and its staff have grown during these years.

José A. Cárdenas
Executive Director
October 16, 1989

INTRODUCTION

IDRA was founded to promote educational equity, particularly for poor, minority and disadvantaged students. These are the students now considered "at-risk" of dropping out of school.

For more than sixteen years, our concern for the educational enfranchisement of all children has given us broad and deep experience with this group of students.

IDRA established the Center for the Prevention and Recovery of Dropouts in the Spring of 1986. The Center constantly receives requests for information. One key means of disseminating information is the *IDRA Newsletter*. The demand for reprints of articles about dropout prevention encouraged us to reprint them under one cover. This compendium includes all articles related to dropouts that have appeared in the *IDRA Newsletter* from 1986 to the present.

Articles appear in chronological order that address the magnitude of the problem; the costs of students' not completing school; and program responses - what works and why.

In reflecting on our research and experiences in dropout prevention, we find the single most important key to success is Valuing—every student, every parent, every school. Our analysis of programs that work is expressed as "**VSP**": **V**aluing students, providing **S**upport, and involving **P**arents.

To make this publication more useful we have included a keyword index, and a brief summary of each article in the table of contents.

If you want further assistance, or are interested in other publications, please call or write.

Aurelio M. Montemayor
Director,
Center for the Prevention and Recovery of Dropouts

Managing Editor: Charles Cavazos

Cover Art: Wendy Cadena, Harlandale Middle School

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This article examines imperatives for the design of effective educational strategies, as well as common pitfalls, germane to combating the dropout problem.

2. Coca Cola Valued Youth Partnership Program Results of Second Year Evaluation by *Albert Cortez, Ph.D.* and *Michaela Penny-Velazquez, M.A.*, May 1986 5

This article examines a program that pays students at-risk of dropping out to tutor elementary school students. Participants' attitude toward self, others, home and work are reviewed.

3. The Texas School Dropout Survey Project: A Summary of Findings, November 1986 9

A look at the extent of the dropout problem in Texas, including methodology and statistics. The article concludes with an in-depth look at the implications of the research.

4. Valued Youth Partnership Program: Dropout Prevention Through Cross-age Tutoring by *Alicia Salinas Sosa, Ph.D.*, November 1986 13

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5. Attrition Rates as Indicators of School Dropouts by *José A. Cárdenas, Ed. D.* and *María del Refugio Robledo, Ph.D.*, February 1987 15

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6. Undereducated Youth in Texas: A Study of Macro-Community Dropout Rates by *Dorothy Waggoner, Ph.D.*, March 1987 19

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7. The Economic Impact of the Dropout Problem
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8. Trustee of Education Award by *José A. Cárdenas, Ed.D.*, June 1987 31

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11. Educating At-Risk Children: A Top National Priority, October 1987 39

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12. Impact of the Valued Youth Partnership Program
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13. Formulating a Plan for Dropout Prevention
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The Texas Legislature mandated that school districts develop a comprehensive plan to address the dropout problem. This article serves as a guide to develop an effective plan.

14. The Trials and Tribulations of Learning Science & Mathematics by At-Risk Students by *Wendy Schwartz*, April 1988 47

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15. Attrition Rates for State Schools Show Increase by *José A. Cárdenas, Ed.D.*, May 1988 51

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16. Partnerships with Parents and Your Community: How Adult and Community Education Can Help by *Tina Whitney*, June 1988 55

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17. Valued Youth Partnerships Tutors are Honored for Helping Others Succeed, June 1988 57

An account of the Valued Youth Partnership Program end-of-year ceremony, which recognized 200 student tutors and the positive impact they have made.

18. Acceleration: The Rapidly Growing Crisis of Illiteracy in our Modern Workplaces by *Dale McCullough, Ph.D.* June 1988 59

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20. Typology Sets the Stage for Dropout Prevention Action, September 1988 65

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21. Tennessee's Government Attacks Dropout Problem with 15-Point Initiative to Focus on At-Risk Students, September 1988 67

An account of Tennessee's plan to combat the state's dropout problem.

22. AT&T Grand Awarded to IDRA for Helping At-Risk Students, March 1989 71

This article tells of corporate funding of a program that hires teachers to work after school hours to tutor students and their parents.

23. Texas Dropouts Revisited: 1989 by *José A. Cárdenas, Ed.D.*, April 1989 73

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24. Parental Involvement: A "Valued" Component for Children to Succeed in School by *Frances Guzmán, M.Ed., Aurelio Montemayor, M.Ed.* and *Cindy S. Raisor*, May 1989 77

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25. Parents Working for Our Valued Youth by *Merci Ramos, M.A.*, May 1989 79

This article tells how the VYP Program includes the parents of at-risk students in the education of their children.

26. IDRA Workshops for Parents of Pre-K Children by *Alicia Salinas Sosa, Ph.D.*, May 1989 81

Another account of the training of parents to help the children toward educational success, this time with pre-kindergarten LEP children.

27. Communicating with Parents Via Television by *Liz Garza, M.A.*, May 1989 83

Communicating with parents is a common problem for school personnel. Here is a literacy program that solves the problem by utilizing a common appliance -- television.

28. Parental Involvement Conference — A Wonderful Success
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Parents have much to contribute to the education of their children. Here is an account of a conference that allowed program-participant parents from metropolitan Texas cities to meet with one another and exchange ideas.

29. ASPIRA and IDRA Join Forces to Battle Dropout by *Mary Helen Napoles*, May 1989 85

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30. How Do I Value You? Let Me Count the Ways
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It is critical to value at-risk students, but it's not always easy. This article suggests how this group can be valued, and how some schools are already doing it.

31. Addressing School Dropouts by *José A. Cárdenas, Ed.D.*, August 1989 91

This article contains the results of an intensive study of Hispanic dropouts in Texas, including what was learned, and recommendations based on this new data.

32. Effective Schools: The Multicultural Perspective. A Strategy for Responding to the Needs of At-Risk Students by *Bradley Scott, M.A.*, August 1989 95

If "effective schools" are indeed to be "effective," they will need to incorporate a multicultural perspective. This article is a guide to do it.

33. Partners for Valued Youth: Year One Progress Report
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Similar to the Valued Youth Partnership Program, the PVY program is a research and demonstration project designed to improve the performance of at-risk students using cross-age tutoring. This is the progress report.

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The Prevention and Recovery of Dropouts: An Action Agenda

by *María del Refugio Robledo, Ph.D.*

As the enormous personal and societal costs attendant to dropping out of school have become recognized, the "dropout problem" has achieved unprecedented urgency. Current dropout statistics are a national disgrace.

During the past decade, approximately 25% of all 18-year-olds did not complete high school. Since 1980, national graduation rates have declined from 76% to 73%. The problem is particularly acute among minorities. The dropout rate among Black students has been reported as being 40% greater than that of non-Hispanic White students. Among Hispanics, the dropout rate is 250% greater than non-Hispanic White rates. It is estimated that 35% to 88% of eligible Hispanic students do not complete high school. Coupled with the statistics of demography, dropout rates — if unchanged — will have a profound effect on society and on the economy. In approximately 14 years, one of every three persons in this country will belong to a minority group, and the majority of the school-age population in 53 major American cities will be minority children.

The problem becomes much more than unemployment or underemployment for the individuals themselves. National economic effectiveness, as well as societal efficiency and well-being, also suffer. Large numbers of unschooled youth reduce the available skilled labor pool leaving American business vulnerable to better-educated foreign competitors. Dropping out of school has been correlated with increased dependence on welfare programs (both cash and in-kind programs like Food Stamps), increased dependence of cash transfer programs (like Unemployment Insurance) and increased anti-social behavior and criminal activity.

IDRA's Center for the Prevention and Recovery of Dropouts focuses on the urgent and complex problem of unschooled youth. The Center is undergirded by three tenets.

(1) Current dropout rates are unacceptable and our country must not continue to incur the social, political, and economic costs attendant to these rates.

(2) Excellence in education and the resultant social, political, and economic benefits are only possible in a context of equity and inclusivity.

(3) Excellence and equity in education can be achieved through commitment and capacity.

The purposes of the Center are as follows:

- to conduct research which will advance informed action on the causes, the nature, the magnitude, and the impact of the dropout phenomenon,
- to identify and develop program and policy strategies which will reduce the unacceptable high percentage of students who drop out of school, and
- to assist school systems, institutions, and communities to adopt a full school enrollment goal and to assist them in designing, implementing, and evaluating strategies to achieve the goal.

Center associates are currently involved in several efforts which forward the accomplishment of its purposes.

Through support provided by the General Services Foundation, Center associates are conducting a study of the Impact of HB 72, the Texas educational reform legislation. The research focuses on the effect of the legislation on disadvantaged, high risk, and minority students — both those who stay in school and those who leave.

Under contract with the Dallas Independent School District (DISD), the Center has initiated a 30-month study of the Hispanic Dropout in DISD. The study will be completed in September 1988 and will examine the magnitude of the problem, the characteristics of high risk and dropout students, and the role of school, family, and community in a student's decision to leave school. The study will result in instructional, programmatic, administrative, and fiscal recommendations for the district. (See page 2.)

The Center is also conducting action research designed to inform policy decision makers in the State of Texas. The Texas School Dropout Survey, funded by the Texas Department of Community Affairs, is designed to examine: (a) the magnitude and nature of the dropout problem in the State, (b) the cost-benefit effects of student dropouts on the Texas economy and the criminal justice system, (c) the adequacy of current programs, and (d) the characteristics of educational and employment-based proposals which hold promise in addressing the issue. Re-

search findings will be presented to the Texas Legislature in December 1986. (See page 2.)

The Valued Youth Program is now in the second year of a multi-year effort designed as a youth-tutoring-youth program for students at high risk of dropping out. The study is supported by Coca Cola USA and includes high school students from two key districts in San Antonio, Texas.

Center associates are also collaborating with Aspira of America, Inc. in the implementation of a study of the dropout phenomenon among Hispanic youth in five cities — Chicago, Miami, Newark, Philadelphia, and San Antonio. The study is being conducted by Aspira with the sponsorship of the Inter-University Program for Latino Research and the Social Science Research Council. Research findings will be used to generate policy recommendations at the local and national level.

Relatedly, IDRA conducted the San Antonio Adult Illiteracy Study in order to determine the number of functional illiterates in the San Antonio area. The study was conducted in cooperation with the business community of San Antonio and is being used to develop a city-wide private and public sector response to the problem of a large number of adult youth without a high school education.

It is our belief that appropriately configured dropout initiatives can produce results which are essential to the well-being of our society and the economic potency of this country. We believe also that dropout initiatives will be successful if investments are made in those educational strategies with the greatest potential for payoff, and if those strategies are planned and conducted in ways which avoid common pitfalls and incorporate experience and research-based educational imperatives. IDRA CPRD associates have identified five pitfalls which must be avoided and seven imperatives which must be addressed in developing and implementing workable solutions.

Common Pitfalls

School-based responses for preventing and recovering dropouts must avoid common pitfalls which in the past have doomed such efforts to failure. The following must be avoided in developing strategies or models.

1. *Deficit Model Base.* It is erroneous and counterproductive to assume that the target population is entirely to blame for educational failure. Deficit models place a stress on changing the characteristics of a student so that the student will fit into school programs created for homogeneous populations. In many cases, it is impossible for students to make such a transformation; in other cases, it is questionable whether it is desirable to do so. In all cases, it is detrimental to initiate relationships between student and school with the student's rejection of self as the basis for acceptance and integration. The essence of a successful school-student relationship is not the characteristics of the student, nor the characteristics of the school, but the extent to which each can accommodate the other's characteristics.

2. *Elitist Model Base.* The prevention and recovery of school dropouts cannot be based on the assumption that some students are valuable and others are valueless. Programmatic efforts which aim at the improvement or enhancement of educational opportunities for some students at the expense of other students is counterproductive. The need for a skilled, literate, and educated work force precludes the development of a small elite backed by massive numbers of unproductive, functional illiterates.

3. *Simplistic and Superficial Responses.* Since the causes for students dropping out of school are extremely complex, it is doubtful that an effective solution can be found based on simplistic and superficial approaches to the problem. On the contrary, effectiveness will require comprehensive approaches which are also cost-beneficial.

4. *Impractical Approaches.* Solutions to the problem of school dropouts must be feasible in terms of changing variables which are within the control of the school. Solutions must also be realistic in terms of costs and incentives within a public school setting. For this reason, persons involved in the development of feasible approaches for the reduction of dropout rates must be persons intimately acquainted with the realities of schools.

5. *Dysfunctional Responses.* In the history of the schools' relationships with special populations, it is not uncommon to find educational policies and practices which were aimed at the amelioration or elimination of a problem and which turned out to be useless or, in some cases, exacerbated the problem. Dysfunctional responses are usually created by ignorance of non-middle class values and orientations, and by a belief that atypical

populations will react to and be motivated by the same stimuli found effective with middle class populations.

Imperatives

1. Strategies must impact *the triad* of school, family/community and student.

   A comprehensive approach to identifying and reversing dropout causal factors requires an examination of quantifiable manipulable variables in a triad involving student, school, and family/community. Early studies of dropouts tended to be extensively student-centered and attempted to identify individual characteristics which could then be generalized to the population of dropouts. The guiding assumption in the early research was that student characteristics were the primary cause of dropping out. This assumption does not account for that fact that students with particular characteristics drop out of school in some settings and under some circumstances, while other students with similar characteristics stay in school.

   Later research then began to focus on schools and the characteristics of schools which contribute to dropping out. Only recently, have research efforts and program responses begun to focus on the dropout problem as a complex phenomenon that involves the configuration of student, school, and parent/ community characteristics. It is essential that an examination and understanding of the relationships among these characteristics guide the development of dropout prevention and recovery strategies.

2. Strategies must attend to the development of expertise in the *management of innovations.*
   The success of any innovation is ultimately dependent on its acceptance within the institutional contests that host it. Indeed, most efforts at educational reform over the last two decades and the corollary expenditures of billions have failed not because they were conceptually unsound, but because they were rejected by those vested with responsibility for implementation.

   If innovations are to be successful and accepted, two things must occur. First, program development must be based on the systematic acquisition of timely, accurate, and relevant information about the innovation and the context within which it operates. The Context-Input-Process-Product (CIPP) model provides a structure for the acquisition of such information and for decision-making on the basis of such information. The model allows for examining the link between the results of an innovation and its antecedents: program context, program input, and program processes. The information which is generated can then be used to make decisions about recycling, refining, or discontinuing a program. Secondly, resources of time, people, and money must be focused on the technology of the "management of innovations." This technology requires that systematic strategies and procedures be developed to ensure that:
   - goals are set and are clear,
   - core tasks are accomplished,
   - connected parts are linked,
   - communication flows laterally and horizontally,
   - relationships are established with external units,
   - management is responsible for steering work, and
   - adaptation between the school and units outside the school is reciprocal.

   Without this technology, any educational initiative is doomed to failure.

3. Strategies must be based on a understanding of *heterogeneity* and the need for local adaptation of intervention models.

   The recognition of the heterogeneity of the dropout population, and of the schools and communities in which they are based, is crucial. Efforts to identify and profile students at high risk of dropping out must incorporate this recognition. For instance, the middle school male who drops out of a small suburban school may differ greatly from a tenth grade female urban school dropout. In tandem with the recognition of heterogeneity and the development of profiles (rather than universal profile), we must recognize that variety of models must be developed. These must be responsive to the range of student, school, and community characteristics identified and must then be adapted to the characteristics of a local situation.

4. Strategies must incorporate analyses of *costs* and *benefits.*

   The concept that education is a significant and legitimate economic investment which yields personal and social returns had been largely accepted by economists, policymakers, educators, and social service practitioners. The development of human capital in terms of formal educations plays a role in: (a) increasing production through the income-generating capacity of

the labor force, and (b) increasing efficiency by reducing welfare costs and releasing public resources, e.g., unemployment insurance or welfare, for more productive pursuits. Despite the acceptance of the concept at a theoretical level, however, little has been done to examine and analyze benefits and costs associated with the prevention and recovery of dropouts.

It is our belief that a dropout initiative must include cost benefit analyses in both short and long term contexts. In a long term context, cost categories would include per pupil expenditures, youth remediation expenses, and training costs. On the benefits side, categories would include reduced dependence on welfare programs, i.e., Unemployment Insurance, and reduced antisocial behavior such as drug/alcohol abuse, criminal activity, and related expenses. In a short term context, cost/benefits associated with alternative programs would be examined.

5. Strategies must provide *incentives* for commitment and participation.

   The private sector has long recognized that commitment to the company's objectives are vital to success, and that this commitment can be fostered through the utilization of incentives which respond to employee needs and which are consistent with the corporate culture. A successful dropout initiative must involve the commitment of the private sector, the schools, and the communities in which project(s) are based. Moreover, the strategies must integrate incentives for all facets of the dropout-related triad, i.e., the student, the school, and the family/community.

   For the schools, these incentives could include support for the acquisitions of advanced degrees or professional credentials; financial incentives for program participation; or other related means to insure that teachers, counselors, and school administrators become active participants in the intervention process. For parents, incentives may include opportunities for more meaningful participation in their child's schooling, support for improving/acquiring basic literacy skills, or empowering them with skills or knowledge which will enable them to become real partners (rather than passive participants) in the process of educating their children. For students, incentives could include course credit for participating in dropout prevention strategies such as peer counseling and basic skills remediation,special recognition, or acknowledgement for program participation, or other successful student participation approaches. For all, incentives must be grounded in opportunities to really make a difference. Like the intervention models, incentives must be tailored to the needs and realities of each local context.

6. Strategies must incorporate ways of increasing the *capacity* of schools, family/community, and students to produce results.

   In order to develop and conduct quality and comprehensive prevention and recovery programs for dropouts, we believe that capacity building is a must. Special attention should be given to: (a) the formulation and implementation of specialized prevention and recovery approaches, (b) staff development activities and follow up, (c) parent and community involvement, and (d) administrative roles and responsibilities as these relate to dropout prevention and recovery strategies. In using this holistic approach, we must develop, refine, and reinforce capacity and skills at each level of the student/school/family-community triad.

7. Strategies must allow for *diffusion* of successful approaches and the development of action networks.

   Effective innovations "die" for lack of dissemination, diffusion, and replication. To have significant effects, a dropout initiative must incorporate provisions for information dissemination, and for networking of persons involved in dropout related activities. Information diffusion efforts must capitalize on the most effective existing private and public sector networks at local, state, regional, and national levels. A communication network among persons involved in dropout related activities is critical. At present, there is no such network. Conduits for centralization and exchange of relevant information among private and public sector parties would go a long way toward producing results and fostering a climate in which actionable, informed, and committed efforts do make a difference.

   The urgent dropout problem which faces this country can be addressed by attending to the imperatives which have been outlined. Timely, relevant, and useful research can continue to inform the creation of solutions and the production of results. ◊

Coca Cola Valued Youth Partnership Program
Results of Second Year Interim Evaluation

by *Albert Cortez, Ph. D.* and *Michaela Penny-Velazquez, M.A.*

In cooperation with IDRA and the Coca Cola Company, the Edgewood and South San Antonio school districts are implementing the "Coca Cola Valued Youth Partnership Program," a project designed to demonstrate an effective method for reaching area high school and junior high school students at risk of dropping out of school. Operating in two high school and two middle school sites, the program is now in its second year of operation. A total of 100 participants were enrolled in the program in the 1985-1986 school year.

Using a Youth Tutoring Youth model, the program is designed to respond to characteristics associated with high-risk, dropout-prone students including pressing financial needs, student underachievement in basic skills, poor or deteriorating self-concepts, high absentee rates, and disciplinary problems. In addition to tutoring elementary children and earning some income, students are enrolled in a special course which is designed to prepare them for their tutoring roles and to assist them with strengthening basic skills local, and/or state credit is provided for enrollment in these classes. The program also integrates field trips involving both student participants and their estimated 150 elementary school "tutees," and presentations by community-based minority leaders from business and government who served as role models for the youth involved in the program.

Expanded from the high school to include an additional 50 students at the middle school level in 1985-1986, the program has been well received by students, their teachers, as well as the elementary school teachers assisted by students from the program. Perceived as a refinement of the Youth Tutoring Youth model implemented in the Edgewood School District in the 1970s, the program incorporates a comprehensive program monitoring and evaluation component which calls for compilation of data on selected facets of program operations. The remainder of this article briefly describes the evaluation procedures utilized, and presents major findings from the program's 1985-1986 interim report.

Program Evaluation Strategies

Recognizing the need to monitor program implementation and to assess the effects of the program on student participants, IDRA worked with the districts' staff in the refinement of the comprehensive evaluation plan utilized during the program's initial year. The 1985-1986 evaluation plan called for the collection of a variety of data including student grades, information on the nature, and frequency of disciplinary referrals, attendance data, performance on various academic achievement tests, and assessments of student self-concept. In addition to student participant data, the design called for the collection of data on the academic performance of elementary school children receiving tutoring from program participants. In order to add depth to the evaluation, survey data regarding perceived effects of the program as seen by student participants, students' parents, teachers of students enrolled in the program as well as counseling and administrative personnel at the various campuses where the program operates were also collected. Analyses of the quantitative data required tabulation and analysis of data using measures of dispersion, central tendency, and tests of statistical significance of changes observed. Qualitative data were reviewed and analyzed, abstracting major trends observed in the various survey questions utilized. A discussion of the results of the analyses of interim data are presented in the remainder of this article.

Participant Profile

A review of student demographic data reveals that program participants included students in grades six through 12. At the high school 44% were sophomores, 32% were juniors, and 18% were freshmen. Middle school students included a proportional ratio of seventh and eighth graders. Of the total students who participated in the program, 48% were female. Ages for the participants ranged from 12 to 18; the modes for the age distribution were 13 at the middle school level and 17 at the high school sites. Eighty percent of all student participants were from low income families. Ninety-four percent of the program participants were Mexican-American.

Academic Achievement

In order to assess the effects of the program's basic skills improvement effort, data on the academic performance of students in English and Math Coursework undertaken were collected and analyzed. Through the four six-weeks periods for which data were available the majority of students in each of the four participating campuses were maintaining a 70 or higher average, (the state mandated passing score for all subjects) in English and Math courses in which they enrolled.

A review of data on students' overall grade point average reveals that the great majority of students were maintaining a 70 or higher overall GPA, with an increase in the percentage of students achieving at that level generally noted over the 24 week span.

Absentee Rates

Absentee rates for students were also analyzed for the four six-weeks periods of the 1985-1986 school year. Analysis of this data reflects that the absentee rates for the students is substantially below those levels anticipated for most high-risk youth; mean absentee rates for each six weeks period range from a low of .65 at one of the middle school sites, to a high of 4.4 days for one six-weeks period at a high school campus. The average absentee rates for the four campuses range from .95 for one of the middle schools to 35 at one of the high school sites. Given the State's mandate that five unexcused absences require automatic failing of students, the relatively low absentee rate reported on these students indicates that the program is succeeding in keeping them enrolled and participating in their classes.

Withdrawals from School

The school holding power was measured by determining the number of program students who remained enrolled through the grading periods examined. A review of the data indicates that the dropout prevention strategies being utilized were relatively effective as the dropout rates ranged from a low of 0% at the middle school campuses, to 20% at one of the high school sites. If the trend continues for the remaining two six-weeks grading periods, the program's overall dropout rate may be well below 20% by the year's end, a rate substantially below the anticipated almost 100% rate for similar high-risk youth.

In addition to examining available grade, absentee, and retention data, the interim analysis also included an assessment of student, counselor, and administrator perceptions of program impact. The remainder of this article examines the major findings gleaned from an analysis of survey responses obtained from these various entities.

Campus Personnel Survey

Qualitative feedback regarding program impact was elicited from campus personnel through survey instruments designed to gather perceptions from those people having had contact with program participants. Data were collected from campus principals, vice principals, and counselors.

For the most part, campus administrators from both school districts have observed better behavior, improved attendance, more interest in passing classes, and greater effort on the part of project participants. The opportunity for students to earn spending money has been noted as a positive benefit, providing an incentive for the participants.

Regarding attitude changes, it was noted that the students enrolled in the program have developed friendships, better rapport and socialization skills, and respect for one another. Comments reflect that a more positive self-concept and better outlook were observed on the part of tutors. For the most part, campus administrators have noted that the program has encouraged students to remain enrolled in school.

Principals from the elementary campuses where program participants tutor observed that tutors have had a positive influence on the tutees. The elementary students have benefited from the one-to-one instruction provided by the tutors.

All respondents indicated strong support for program continuation.

Student Survey

Another dimension added to the qualitative data collection process consisted of gathering students' perceptions through an open-ended survey instrument designed to elicit student feedback on their perceived growth and development as a result of participating in the program. Patterns and trends for item responses were identified and categorized according to areas of similarities in response.

In what ways have you benefited from participating in the youth tutoring youth program?

Participants from Dwight and Trum in middle schools overwhelmingly responded that money has been the primary benefit. Among the responses indicating that economic benefits were foremost, students mentioned that they could buy clothes for school and personal supplies, have "nice" things, and help out the family financially.

Other responses regarding benefits reaped from participating in the program primarily were clustered in two areas: Student Attitude and Behavior Changes, and School Related Improvement. It was noted that for the most part, students listed learning patience along with earning money as being a primary benefit in participating in the program. Students reported that they had benefited by having more control and responsibility, both for self and others, and that the program has helped them have better personal attitudes and improved self-concept.

Several students indicated that they had learned how to take care of and help children as a result of the

tutoring experience. It was noted by many respondents that they were getting along better with children than they had been prior to program participation.

In the area of School Related Improvement, students noted that the program has helped them in their study habits such as completing homework, desiring to learn more, and becoming stronger in school work. Several students revealed that the program has helped them to remain in school.

Sample verbatim comments include:

"This program has helped me have patience."

"The program has helped me in having more responsibility for others and myself."

"Helps to keep me in school and helps us get closer to other people."

"The kids look to you, tell you their problems and they trust you."

"It gives me the opportunity to show what I've learned."

The next survey item contained five parts. Each is analyzed and presented below.

How has participating in the program helped you in your attitude toward: school, home, work, self, and children?

An analysis of responses yielded four major categories: Improved Relations with Teachers and Students, Improvement in School Work, Improvement in Attitude Toward Education and Learning, and Improved Behavior.

Major findings reveal that students indicated a perceived improvement in relations with teachers, students, and others. Comments reflect that students are getting along better with teachers and are respecting classmates more. Others noted that participation in the program has helped with homework, passing, improved reading, and better grades. Students indicated that they were more interested in learning and in classes, more motivated to finish school, and more future-oriented with regards to employment.

Sample responses include:

"I've asked teachers a lot more questions and they are willing to listen."

"It has made me want to graduate and do so many things."

"It helped me to learn a little bit about myself."

"It made me see that you need schooling in order to maintain a good job."

Attitude Toward Home

An examination of responses revealed three major categories. These include: Improved Relations with Parents/Adults, Improved Relations with Siblings (Children/Relatives), and Family Financial Responsibility.

Middle school participants indicated that their attitude toward their parent(s) and adults had changed as a result of participating in the program. This pattern was not evident for high school responses however. Middle school students observed that the program has helped them respect and get along with their parents, and be respected at home.

A majority of respondents noted improved attitudes and relations with family members, i.e. brothers, sisters, nieces, nephews, and cousins. A review of comments revealed that students are helping younger brothers and sisters, getting along with family members better, and have realized more patience, cooperation, and understanding with children as a result of their tutoring experience.

In terms of family financial responsibility, several students listed having money as a change in their attitude toward home. Students commented that they were able to help their families with money by buying their own clothes, having their own spending money, helping pay bills, and being more responsible. Comments reflect that their participation in the program has helped in feeling a sense of independence in earning their own spending money and not having to depend on their families for money.

Selected comments reflect the following:

"I get along with my parents a lot more than I did when I wasn't in the program."

"It helps us not to ask for money and helps our parents with payments."

"I'm more cooperative in trying to help (tutor) my little brother with his homework."

Attitude Toward Work

Responses regarding attitude toward work fell within two predominant categories: Responsibility, and Improved Outlook on Self and Work.

In the area of improved responsibility, students noted that the program has given and taught them more responsibility not only for themselves but for

those students whom they tutor. Students expressed that promptness was a major factor in increased responsibility.

Respondents revealed that helping and tutoring children has improved their viewpoint of work. Gaining experience and enjoying working were listed as improved attitudes toward work. Several students observed that they not only enjoy working, but also feel better, have more control and patience, and have an improved outlook of self. Comments reveal:

"It helped me look at working in a different way."

"I work harder."

"It's helping the children we tutor."

Attitude Toward Self

According to a review of student responses regarding attitude toward self, one major pattern emerged revealing that students realized an improved self esteem. The majority of respondents expressed having more self control, confidence, patience, responsibility, and communication skills. Several students noted perceived improvements in how they view themselves and others, recognized improved relations with others, and gained a greater understanding of others and self.

Samples of students' perceptions include:

"It has given me a better concept about myself. I can help others in many ways."

"Helps me have respect for myself and know how I should act around children."

"It helps me to understand what I do or where I am heading to."

"It makes me feel better about myself because I'm helping younger kids to be better in school."

Attitude Toward Children

An examination of responses regarding students' attitudes toward children reveals that respondents overwhelmingly agree that their attitudes toward children had improved as a result of participation in the program. The majority of respondents stated that they like and enjoy helping children more, feel that tutoring is fun, have more patience and self control in working with children, and feel more responsible. Several students noted that they had gained a better understanding of children and have enhanced their communication skills as a result of tutoring young children. Many respondents noticed that their impressions of children had changed and that they are more concerned about children after having tutored them.

Student comments reveal:

"It makes them feel good and happy so they will not feel sad because they don't understand their work."

"I try harder to understand them. I listen more to what they have to say."

"It makes me feel as if they look up to me."

"I think the children have learned something and it makes me feel good."

The last survey item reviewed here asked participants to list some reasons why they stay in school. Primarily student responses fell within three major categories: Future Orientation — Job/Career and Education, Learning, and the Coca Cola Program.

The category having the greatest frequency of responses was Future Orientation which includes jobs, careers, education, and college. Responses ranged from desiring a better education, receiving a diploma, obtaining "good" employment, job flexibility, going to college, and being prepared for the future. Among the aspirations listed, six respondents indicated the desire to go to college, and become doctors or lawyers.

Several respondents stated that they remain in school in order to learn. Responses included learning math, reading, writing, learning about teaching, learning what's important, building knowledge, and the desire to learn more. One respondent noted: "The quest for knowledge isn't just in high school or college."

Other students reported that they stay in school because of their participation in the Coca Cola Youth Tutoring Program. According to one respondent, "The Youth program has made me like school. It has helped me a lot."

Other reasons listed for staying in school were varied and include such reasons as friendships, "girls," parents wanting their children to learn, involvement in activities, and enjoying school.

Among the responses listed are the following:

"I don't want to dropout. I enjoy school life."

"Better prepared for the real world."

"I know that you can't get a good paying job without a high school diploma."

"Project 'Coke' helps me stay in school because it's like a responsibility."

"I'm interested in my future. I want to make something of myself when I grow up and be able to give a better life to my children."

More details concerning various aspects of the program, including a description of procedures for replicating the strategies described are available from IDRA.◊

THE TEXAS SCHOOL DROPOUTS SURVEY PROJECT: A SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Editor's note: *The following is an excerpt from the Texas School Dropout Survey Project: A Summary of Findings report. The research was conducted by Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) through a contract with the Texas Department of Community Affairs.*

The problem of school dropouts has achieved unprecedented urgency at national, state, and local levels. The importance given to the issue may reflect not a dramatic increase in the number or rate of students dropping out of school before completing the 12th grade but the increasing educational needs of our society. Whereas only a few years ago a low skilled labor pool formed the basis of the economy, recent years have seen a trend toward technology and services as the most important labor need for business and industry. Today, the typical blue collar job requires skills for reading and interpreting instructions, tables, graphs, and manuals.

The State of Texas has experienced a similar change in the composition of its labor force. The oil, minerals, and agriculture sectors of the economy have relinquished their demand on labor in favor of technology and a service economy. A recent analysis of the Texas labor market projects that, while the State economy will grow by 21.8% between 1982 and 1990, technology intensive occupations will grow by 32.0% over the same time frame (Texas Department of Community Affairs, 1986). The ability of the State to absorb an illiterate and unschooled labor force has become so limited, that there is a State imperative to keep students in school long enough for them to acquire the extensive basic skills, knowledge, and competencies necessary to function in our new society.

To address this imperative, the Texas School Dropout Survey Project was initiated in order to establish an information base for analyzing the dropout problem in Texas and to formulate recommendations to the 69th Legislature based upon research findings. The Project was mandated in House Bill 72 and was funded in the Spring of 1986 by the Texas Department of Community Affairs (TDCA) in collaboration with the Texas Education Agency (TEA). Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) was contracted to conduct three of the Project's four research tasks:

- Task 1 — Measure the extent of school dropouts in Texas through valid and reliable dropout indices (Research Task 1).
- Task 2 — Collect and analyze benefit-cost data on the impact of dropouts on the criminal justice and human service systems in Texas (Research Task 3).
- Task 3 — Identify and evaluate in-school and alternative training programs for dropouts in Texas (Research Task 4).

In addition to these three major research areas, the measurement of the extent of school dropouts was supplemented by three tasks in response to requests made by the TDCA and the TEA. These additional research tasks included the following:

1 — Conduct a meta-analysis of existing school district dropout documentation.
2 — Design and implement procedures for tracking of student withdrawals in a sample of districts.
3 — Generate estimates of macrocommunity dropout rates in the State.

The research which examined the principal causes for school dropouts (Research Task 2) was conducted by Texas A&M - Prairie View under a separate contract with that institution. No causal data are included in this IDRA report.

This report summarizes only the studies conducted by IDRA as part of the Texas School Dropout Survey Project. Comprehensive reports for each area of study are available in seven volumes.

Volume 1:	Magnitude of the Problem — Census Analysis
Volume 2:	Magnitude of the Problem — Attrition Analysis
Volume 3:	Magnitude of the Problem — Tracking Study
Volume 4:	Magnitude of the Problem — School District Research and Procedures
Volume 5:	Benefit — Cost Impact of the Dropout Problem
Volume 6:	Program Responses — Their Nature and Effectiveness
Volume 7:	Study Methods and Procedures

In conducting the research, several methodological concerns were addressed. The variability and general unavailability of dropout data required multiple methods of analysis in order to generate valid and reliable dropout estimates. Both microtechniques and macrotechniques were used to examine the magnitude of the problem. Microtechniques included: (a) collecting data on district dropout identification procedures, (b) examining available district research on dropouts, and (c) conducting a student tracking survey. Through these techniques, intradistrict and interdistrict issues of measurement and definition were identified. Macrotechniques were used to estimate dropout rates. Estimates were generated by developing attrition indices using 1982-1983 and 1985-1986 Fall Survey data provided by the Texas Education Agency. Estimates were also generated by analyzing the 1980 Census five percent Public Use Microdata Sample.

The assessment of the economic impact of the dropout problem to the State was derived from data from State

agencies, including the Texas Department of Human Resources (TDHR), the Texas Department of Corrections (TEC), the Texas Department of Community Affairs (TDCA), and the Texas Education Agency (TEA).

In-school and out-of-school alternative training programs for dropout prevention and recovery were identified through surveys sent to school districts, community colleges, service delivery areas, colleges and universities, and private industry councils. Information on the types of programs and services provided was collected and organized into a state-wide directory. A meta-analysis of evaluative programs data was deemed inappropriate due to the small number of programs with evaluation data.

Executive Summary

This report presents the results of the dropout studies conducted by Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA). The major research tasks were designed to examine three primary questions:

(1) What is the magnitude of the dropout problem in the state of Texas?
(2) What is the economic impact of the dropout problem for the State?
(3) What is the nature and effectiveness of in-school and alternative out-of-school programs for dropouts in the State?

The research was conducted during the period of May to October 1986. Given the paucity of reliable data on dropouts, research methods included primary analyses of data collected by IDRA and secondary analyses of available databases including Fall Survey and Annual Performance Report information collected by TEA and census data collected by the U.S. Bureau of the Census. Major findings are listed below.

Major Findings

Magnitude of the Problem

1. The 1985-1986 attrition rate for Texas high schools was 33%.
2. One in five Texas young people (nearly half a million) age 16 to 24 were not enrolled in school and had not completed the 12th grade in 1980.
3. Three out of ten Texas dropouts — 152,000 young people — had completed fewer than nine years of schooling when they left school.
4. Approximately 85% of Texas dropouts were born in the United States; less than 15% were born in a foreign country.
5. Of the nearly half a million Texas dropouts age 16 to 24, more than half (52%) were male.
6. Among females, attrition rates ranged from a low of 26% for White females to 43% for Hispanic females.
7. Attrition rates differed markedly for three racial/ethnic groups in the State: 27% for Whites, 34% for Blacks and 45% for Hispanics.
8. Hispanic youth, age 16 to 19, were twice as likely, and youth age 20 to 24, nearly three times as likely to have left school prior to the completion of the 12th grade as their White counterparts.
9. Nearly half of Hispanic dropouts had completed less than ninth grade when they discontinued schooling compared to 18% of White and Black dropouts who discontinued schooling before the ninth grade.
10. Black male dropouts were less likely to be employed than either Hispanic or White male dropouts; two in five Black male dropouts, age 16 to 19, in contrast to one in five of Whites and 26% of Hispanics in that age group, were not in the labor force.

Dropout Accounting Procedures

11. Thirty-nine percent of Texas school districts have a system for identifying dropouts.
12. The majority of districts follow similar but not identical forms of the TEA dropout definition.
13. Sixty-two percent of districts do not use a dropout formula for calculating their dropout rate; among districts who have a formula, 9% use Average Daily Attendance while 24% use Average Daily Membership as the base figure.
14. Only 3.5% of districts have conducted some form of dropout research with only nine districts conducting formal research studies on dropouts.
15. Sixteen percent of the students tracked who were presumed dropouts had not dropped out of school.
16. Twenty-eight percent of the students tracked were employed; of these, most worked at labor intensive, minimum wage jobs.
17. The majority of the students tracked left school because of poor grades, marriage/pregnancy, or financial problems.

Available Dropout Programs

18. Approximately 12% of Texas school districts reported having a dropout program; the number of program reported by colleges, service delivery areas, and other agencies was not commensurate with the magnitude of the problem.
19. Approximately 89% of dropout programs in Texas reported having no evaluation data.
20. The dropout problem is costing the State $17.12 billion in: (a) foregone income and lost tax revenues, and (b) increased costs in welfare, crime and incarceration, unemployment insurance and placement, and adult training and education (for each cohort of dropouts). Every dollar invested in educating potential dropouts is estimated to result in a return of nine dollars.

Implications of the Research

1. *There is a need to develop and use a standardized dropout definition with explicit identification procedures.*

Findings from the district dropout identification and procedures surveys, the dropout research reviews, and the student tracking surveys point to a

need for a standardized, uniformly-applied dropout definition with necessary identification procedures. Only 61% of districts reported having a system for identifying dropouts. Among these districts, definitions were similar but not uniform. The lack of standard definitions effectively precludes aggregating individual district data across campuses within a particular school system.

Any definition and identification procedure at the State level must accommodate contextual variables at the district level and also be rigorous enough to result in reliable aggregation across districts. In addition, the definition must be sensitive to such issues as summer versus school-term withdrawals, non-attenders often carried on membership rolls, verifiable transfer procedures, and completion of graduation requirements.

State efforts at standardizing dropout identification procedures were initiated in the TEA 1985 Annual Performance Report requirements. Dropout reporting requirements for 1986 focus on a districtwide base figure for grades 7-12. Student identification and tracking procedures are also being put in place with the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) being developed by TEA. Both of these efforts can serve as a springboard for further standardization.

2. *There is a need to develop standard procedures for calculating the dropout rate.*

As a corollary to the development of a standard dropout definition, calculation procedures must be standardized and clearly specified. IDRA research findings indicate that 62% of districts do not use a formula for calculating the dropout rate, despite current reporting requirements developed for local use.

Critical manipulable factors involved in the calculation of dropouts rates include: (a) the time frame during which the number of students is counted, e.g. annual versus longitudinal, (b) the range of grade levels included in the dropout rate calculation, i.e. the greater the grade span, the lower the dropout rate, and (c) the student accounting procedures used by the district, e.g., average daily attendance versus average daily membership.

While calculations of district dropout rates must remain useful at local level, State level rates must be used to guide policy deliberations and monitor the effects of State and local intervention strategies.

3. *There is a need to develop a centralized and standardized system for collection of dropout data.*

The extensive variability in district dropout definitions and calculations noted above makes comparability across districts difficult at best. Even with standardization, however, it will become important to develop and maintain a centralized means of aggregating and analyzing dropout data across districts. With a centralized data base, the overall effect of intervention strategies as well as the effect of these efforts on particular populations can be monitored.

4. *There is a need to develop tracking mechanisms which will increase the reliability of dropout counts and will result in more appropriate program interventions.*

Research findings clearly indicate that current communication between and within districts does not facilitate tracking of students who withdraw from a particular school. Approximately 16% of the presumed dropouts tracked across the State by telephone or mail reported having never dropped out of school but either transferred or were still enrolled. Within districts, procedures for tracking of students are varied and depend, in part, on district size and resources. Across districts, standard record-keeping and transfer documentation and follow-up procedures for student withdrawals would greatly facilitate tracking of students as they move from one district to another.

The Migrant Student Record and Transfer System (MSRTS) is the only national longstanding system for tracking of students. The centralization of achievement and other data at a single location currently required by the MSRTS might be circumvented through the use of a computer bulletin board concept with subsequent transfer of records remaining at the district to district level. Whatever the configuration of a feasible tracking system, it is imperative that tracking mechanisms be identified which will enhance monitoring our progress in addressing the dropout problem.

5. *There is a need for early dropout intervention efforts given the large numbers of students who leave before the ninth grade.*

IDRA research evidence reveals that three out of ten Texas dropouts had completed fewer than nine years of schooling. Among Hispanic dropouts, almost half had discontinued schooling before completing the ninth grade. Reviews of existing dropout prevention programs in Texas revealed that few focus on pre-high school students. If dropout prevention efforts are to impact effectively at-risk populations, prevention efforts must begin at earlier levels. In doing so, strategies must be program-focused and avoid merely labeling and stigmatizing students at earlier grades.

6. *There is need for developing and replicating model dropout prevention and recovery programs for particular types of high risk groups.*

Reviews of available literature and IDRA findings related to existing State programs indicated that information on "what works" is generally

fragmented. While some exemplary or model programs are in operation across the country and in the State, there is little systematic and generalizable information which would permit program replication. It is, therefore, important to develop and replicate prototypic programs which have the components which are known to be successful: teaching of basic skills, survival skills training, work/study programs, individualized instruction, strengthened guidance and counseling, highly committed and caring teachers with high expectations for their students, and community/parent/business liaisons.

7. *There is a need to expand the pool of available dropout prevention and recovery programs in order to service the large and diverse dropout population in the State.*

Research on existing dropout programs in Texas revealed that the number currently in operation is inadequate when contrasted with the magnitude of the dropout problem in the State. There is a dearth of formal, structured programs specifically targeted at dropout or dropout-prone youth both within and outside the State's public school systems. In addition to developing and replicating model programs, successful models, and strategies must be incorporated into a substantially larger number of diverse programs which will service diverse needs within the dropout population.

In order to serve the diverse migrant population, for example, a Graduation Enhancement Model is being developed by TEA and the Texas Migrant Interstate Program. According to data compiled by the Coordinator of the Program, migrant dropout rates are estimated to be in the 60% to 90% range. It is obvious, then, that more and varied programs are needed.

8. *There is a need to develop systematic approaches to the evaluation of dropout prevention and recovery efforts.*

The survey of dropout prevention and recovery programs indicated that 89% had no evaluation data. In the absence of such data, conclusions about program effectiveness are not possible. In developing guidelines and standards for evaluation, it is important to ensure that evaluation designs serve to identify programs that work for particular types of participants in particular types of situations. Strategies and results in a prevention program may differ from strategies and results in a recovery effort. Success in a prevention program for non-migrant students may differ from that for migrant students. The enormity of the dropout problem leads to the inevitable conclusion that all students do not leave school for the same or similar reasons or under the same or similar conditions. Neither the reasons not the solutions can be the same. Evaluation designs must be able to generate information about what works, for what target group, and under what conditions.

9. *There is a need to develop and link public and private sector initiatives which are proportionate to the massive number of dropouts in the State.*

There are on-going substantive efforts directed at the dropout issue in the State of Texas. State agencies, including TEA and TDCA, have already begun initiatives designed to address the problem from both a prevention and recovery perspective. Private corporations, including Coca-Cola USA and Southwestern Bell, are sponsoring efforts designed to raise awareness of the issues and to develop program alternatives. Foundation support is also being directed at the dropout problem. The Ford Foundation, for example, has established a national dropout initiative which involves public and private sector collaboratives. Further development of communications networks and other linkages between private and public sector initiatives is central to effective dropout interventions. Coordination is also crucial to maximizing the return on the investment which must be made.

The linkages and networking which are necessary to producing results in the area of school dropouts will be facilitated by working within the concept of the educational pipeline. A focus on the student, as he or she progresses through the pipeline, i.e., kindergarten through public schooling and on to a college education, provides context and continuity. The Dallas County Community College District, for example, has established Adopt-A-School partnerships with area middle schools. College faculty are given release time in order to provide staff development and technical assistance to schools.

10. *There is a need to make an investment in dropout prevention and recovery efforts which is commensurate with the magnitude of the problem and its economic impact in the State of Texas.*

The number of dropouts for the graduating class of 1985-1986 was estimated to be 86,000. This represents a 33% attrition rate for a single group of high school students over a three year period. Over the course of their lifetime, projected losses in tax revenue averaged $58,930 per dropout. The estimated cost of keeping each of these students in school was $3,859 per averted dropout. In addition, the State would have realized a savings of $652 million in social expenditures related to crime, welfare, incarceration, and unemployment costs. Every dollar invested in education potential dropouts will result in a return of nine dollars. An investment in human capital yields substantial short and long term results. ◊

Copies of the summary are available from IDRA. The cost is $5.50 (postage included).

VALUED YOUTH PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM: DROPOUT PREVENTION THROUGH CROSS-AGE TUTORING

by *Alicia Salinas Sosa, Ph.D.*

For several decades, school district administrators have examined questions regarding how best to teach basic academic skills to Hispanic junior high and high school students who are over-age due to retention in grades and who are reading two or more years below grade level. More recently, educators have become increasingly concerned because of the alarmingly high dropout rates reported for Hispanics. The reported figures range from 55% to 65% at the national level, according to studies conducted by Aspira of America, Inc., to 32% to 44% reported for school districts in San Antonio, Texas (Cárdenas, Robledo and Cortez, 1986).

While school personnel, at some time or another, have implemented responses to the perceived problems of underachievement and dropouts, few had been encouraged by the programs' results. That is, not until the last two years, when a new program was implemented in the Edgewood and the South San Antonio Independent School Districts.

Developed by the Intercultural Development Research (IDRA) and funded by Coca-Cola USA, the Valued Youth Partnership Program (VYP) was first implemented in 1984. Through the care and the concern of school personnel, Hispanic students at high risk of dropping out are identified as valued youth and are given an opportunity to make a difference by serving as tutors of younger children. Under their tutelage and care, the young Hispanic students being tutored make gains in school. Most importantly, as the tutors care for and teach basic skills to the younger children, they themselves learn the basic skills, develop new positive perceptions of self and remain in school.

Program Development

Over a period of years, the staff at IDRA's Center for the Prevention and Recovery of Dropouts has studied dropout prevention programs and the students who participated in these programs. Research indicates that a great number of the students who dropout out of school or who are at risk of dropping out are characterized by: (a) underachievement in basic skills, (b) poor performance in class, (c) manifestations of deteriorating self-image, (d) high rates of absenteeism, and (e) an often pressing need to assist their families financially.

The staff at IDRA was similarly familiar with the results of research indicating that use of students as tutors impacted underachieving students both cognitively and academically. Included among these were the independently conducted studies by Rogers (1970) and Rust (1970) which found significant academic gains with sixth grade underachievers. Other studies showed a ten percent improvement in teacher assigned grades for failing mathematics students (Horan et al, 1974) and a 14% to 16% gain in academic grades of students in a math tutoring program (Harris and Sherman, 1973).

It was also well know that the benefits of tutoring extended into the personal and social realms. These included: (a) an improved self-concept (Vasallo, 1973, Armstrong, 1979, Bondi, 1982), and (b) increased cooperation with others (Armstrong, 1979, Bondi, 1982).

Thus, IDRA integrated into its program design aspects regularly found in both remedial academic programs and tutoring programs, while it also incorporated aspects recommended for reducing the dropout rate.

Program Components

The VYP Program includes five major components: (1) classes for student tutors, (2) tutoring sessions, (3) field trips, (4) role modeling, and (5) parental involvement.

Component 1: Classes for Student Tutors. Student tutors are trained through enrollment in a course which is approved for student credit by the State Education Agency. The goals of the course are as follows:

(1) to develop communication skills that will enable the student tutor to become an effective tutor;

(2) to develop reading and writing skills which will enable tutors to teach these skills to those tutored; and

(3) to develop practical awareness of child growth and development theories which are central to the tutoring activity.

The classes are taught by a certified teacher in English or Composite Social Studies who also serves as Teacher/Coordinator. The curriculum focuses on four areas: (1) interpersonal communication skills, (2) child growth and development, (3) language arts skills improvement, and (4) self-image and motivation. The teaching schedules are structured to enable the teacher to visit tutoring sessions. Feedback to the student tutors is an integral part of the tutoring class.

Component II: Tutoring Sessions. Tutoring sessions are located at the elementary schools nearest the host junior or high school. At the designated hours/days, the tutor walks or is transported to the assigned elementary school. While tutoring is conducted immediately following regular school hours, a part-time aide or parent volunteer supervises the children in the tutoring room as they await the arrival of the tutors. A person is made responsible for building and physical plant security for after-school hours.

Tutors engage in tutoring activities five to eight hours per week. They receive the minimum federal wage for all tutoring activities and are expected to adhere to the basic work ethics for the school district. The provision of the stipend for the tutors not only serves as an initial incentive for participation in the program, but also has the practical effect of relieving financial pressure on both the family and the student.

Component III: Field Trips. Field trips are designed to expose students to economic and cultural opportunities in the broader community. They provide a means for tutors and tutees to interact and develop a more productive relationship that ultimately enhances the tutoring environment.

One of the most important activities of the year is a field trip to the Coca-Cola bottling plant, where students receive special recognition for fulfilling their responsibilities as tutors. At the plant, students receive a tour, a dinner, and a red polo shirt with white lettering which identifies them as student tutors in the Coca-Cola sponsored Valued Youth Partnership Program. An executive of the company provides words of appreciation detailing the importance of their involvement in the tutoring program.

In a second recognition event, students attend an Awards Banquet where they receive a certificate of appreciation from an executive from the sponsoring company and the teacher coordinator from their school district. Invited guests include school officials and dignitaries from the public and private sectors. Student tutors listen to a short, inspiring or motivational speech from a now successful Hispanic who shares some the events which helped him/her meet his/her educational goals. At this end-of-year event, students also receive a t-shirt displaying a positive message, e.g., Blessed With Bilingual Brains.

Component IV: Role Modeling. Adults who are successful in their fields serve as role models and speak to the tutors on various topics related to counseling and career development. Successful role models have included graduates of the school districts who have gone on to the following occupations: doctors, professors, judges, attorneys, school board members, members of congress, city council members, artists, singers, superintendents of school districts, school principals, and business executives.

Component V: Parental Involvement. Activities with parents include at least one meeting to enlist their understanding and support for the goals of the project and for their specific assistance and support in encouraging their child to remain in school. Teachers make one home-visit and/or parent conference with the parents of each tutor in the project. It is highly recommended that one or more parent meetings be held to address parenting issues identified during home visits. A parent survey is an important part of the program evaluation.

Program Evaluation

Program evaluation results indicate that the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Partnership program impacted positively on the school and personal lives of Hispanic students. Of 100 students identified as being at high risk of dropping out, 94 remained in school while six dropped out. This rate is well below the 32% to 37% student attrition rate for school districts having similar student characteristics (Cárdenas, Robledo, and Cortez, 1986). The tutoring activities and the basic skills enrichment conducted through the classes for tutors, also helped to improve students' grades in English and mathematics as well as to increase their overall grade point averages. Other program benefits included a decrease in student absences and a decline in discipline referrals (Cortez and Penny-Velazquez, 1986).

Students self-report data indicated that they had reaped many benefits from this program which reached beyond school life to enrich their personal lives. They reported learning patience, getting along better with their siblings, and helping them with their homework. Most importantly, being "behind the teacher's desk" had given some students a glimpse of themselves as reluctant learners and their success with the young children had given them the motivation needed to change. ◊

A copy of the *Valued Youth Partnerships: Programs in Caring* handbook is available for $4.00 from IDRA.

ATTRITION RATES AS INDICATORS OF SCHOOL DROPOUTS

by *José A. Cárdenas, Ed. D.* and *María del Refugio Robledo, Ph. D.*

The Texas Dropout Survey

Under a contractual relationship with the Texas Department of Community Affairs and the Texas Education Agency, Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) has recently conducted an extensive statewide study of school dropouts. The study included estimates of the magnitude of the problem, the long range cost of school dropouts to the State of Texas, and an analysis of school programs related to dropout prevention and rehabilitation.

The study of the magnitude of the problem included several approaches: reviews of prior studies, an analysis of dropout information submitted by Texas school districts to the state education agency in the Annual Performance Report, analysis of Bureau of the Census data, and student surveys in a sampling of Texas school districts.

Purposes of the Magnitude Study

The study of the number of dropouts in the State of Texas served three purposes:

1. To determine the magnitude of the problem, and indirectly to weigh the extent of dropout prevention efforts against the magnitude,
2. To develop baseline data and a methodology for evaluating the success of subsequent dropout prevention efforts, and
3. To provide base information for further inquiry.

Practical Considerations

In the selection of a methodology for estimating the magnitude of the dropout problem in Texas it was necessary to take into account several factors which presented severe limitations for this study.

The selection of methodology was in part based on the general unavailability of reliable and valid data at the local level. Only 39% of Texas districts reported having a system for identifying dropouts. Among these districts, definitions of school dropouts were similar, but not uniform. Sixty-two percent of the districts reported having no formula for calculating the dropout rate. The lack of uniformity in definition and procedures precluded aggregating data from individual school systems.

It was necessary to generate an estimate in a very short period of time. Though the Texas Dropout Survey was originally conceived as a one-year study, various constraints resulted in less than half of the original time line being available for the study. Funding limitations further constrained the amount of effort which could be expended on the study, and there was throughout the project a serious attempt to make a minimum of data demands to the school districts and other agencies participating in the study.

Attrition Rates

The Texas Dropout Study analyzed enrollment figures made available by the Texas Education Agency for a cohort of students who were in the ninth grade in 1982-1983 and followed them for three years up to the 12th grade in 1985-1986. The attrition rate was calculated by dividing the number of missing students by the size of the group in the ninth grade to produce an attrition percentage rate.

Changes in high school enrollments during the three-year period of the longitudinal study were taken into consideration by adjusting the attrition rate. The number of ninth graders in 1982-1983 was multiplied by the high school enrollment in 1985-1986 and divided by the high school enrollment in 1982-1983. This adjustment produced an "expected" 12th-grade enrollment which was subsequently used to produce the attrition rate adjusted for the change in the number of high school students caused by increasing or declining enrollments.

The methodology described above produced estimates of school dropouts at the state regional, county, and district levels. Various assumptions were made in determining the attrition rates for the various entities, though a testing of the assumptions substantiated their validity.

An assumption was made that data made available for the Texas Dropout Study was valid and correct. Several discrepancies in the data were found and corrected by contact with the respective school districts. Enrollment data as well as attrition rates produced were mailed to each of the one thousand school districts in Texas with an attached card requesting that discrepancies be reported. Though some 14 school districts responded with requests for additional information on the methodology used, no cases of erroneous data were identified.

An adjustment for retention did not have to be made. Though retention rates at some grade levels (end of ninth grade) were higher than at any other grade levels, this lack of uniformity was found consistent from one year to the next for the three years studied. If a high percent of the students were retained at the end of a grade level, the loss was compensated for by an equally high percentage of

students retained the previous year. In a test sample of school districts, not one single district showed a significant change in the rate of retention from year to year at any of the grade levels studied.

An assumption was made that the number of students transferring in and out of the district were dispersed evenly throughout the four grade levels. Tests in a sampling of school districts with constant, increasing, and decreasing enrollments failed to identify discrepancies in the distribution of entering or departing students over the four grade levels.

The entire methodology was tested against actual student data in a small sampling of school districts, including the second largest school district in Texas. As in the test for the impact of retention and changes in enrollment, no discrepancies were identified.

A separate study of the magnitude of school dropouts was conducted using data furnished by the Bureau of the Census. The incidence of youth aged 16 to 24 years not enrolled in the school with less than high school completion validated IDRA attrition data at the state, regional, and metropolitan levels. No comparable data was available for analysis in metropolitan areas served by several school districts.

The State attrition rate (33%) was comparable to the dropout estimate produced by the National Center for Educational Statistics' analysis of the High School and Beyond data set (34%).

Examples

The following sample cases from school districts in Texas demonstrate the methodology used in the study.

A. In one school district there were 1,157 students in the ninth grade in 1982-1983. Three years later there were 546 students in the 12th grade (1985-1986). During these three years the high school enrollment held constant, with 2,894 in 1982-1983 and 2,892 in 1985-1986. Since there is virtually no fluctuation in the high school population, the number of students no longer in the cohort (1,157 minus 546 = 611) was divided by the number of students in the original group (1,157) to produce an attrition rate of 53%.

B. In another school district there were 3,168 students in the ninth grade class in 1982-1983. During the next three years the high school enrollment for the district increased from 10,736 to 13,170, a 22.67% increase in enrollments. In order to determine how many students should be in the ninth grade group by the time they were seniors in 1985-1986, it is necessary to adjust the ninth grade number by the 22.67% increase in enrollment. Making this adjustment produces an expected enrollment of 3,886 in the 12th grade in 1985-1986, assuming that the increase in high school enrollment was evenly distributed throughout the four grade levels.

Since only 2,594 students were enrolled in the 12th grade in 1985-1986, there are 1,292 students missing from the expected enrollment of 3,886. This produces an attrition rate of 33%.

If the increases in high school enrollments was not distributed evenly throughout the four grade levels, and none of the 2,434 additional students were enrolled in the class which was followed from 1982-1983 to 1985-1986, the number of students missing from the original group is 18%, though it is ludicrous to assume that none of the additional students were enrolled in the group being studied.

Given two assumptions: 1) that the additional students were evenly distributed among the four grade levels, and 2) that the additional students were enrolled in all grade levels except the one under study, it is the latter assumption that appears much more improbable, statistically invalid, and pragmatically unreasonable. On this basis it stands to reason that the 33% attrition rate figure is a much more valid estimate than the 18%.

C. In a third school district the enrollment at the ninth grade level in 1982-1983 was 1,226. At the 12th grade level three years later the enrollment was 629. The number of missing students (597) divided by the number in the original group is missing. But during the same three-year period the high school enrollment declined from 3,928 to 3,442. Assuming that a proportionate number of students were lost in each of the four grade levels the original number is adjusted to 1,074. Subtracting 629 from the adjusted estimate of unaccounted students and dividing the result by the adjusted estimate produces an attrition rate of 41%.

Caveats

As is the case with any type of statistical analysis, the reader is warned of factors which may not have been taken into consideration in the analysis. The reported attrition rates constitute a good estimate, but should be further interpreted in the light of district information not available to the researchers. The following factors should be considered in estimating the number and rates of students dropping out of school.

A. The attrition rates produced by this study are extremely conservative estimates. Actual dropout rates may be expected to be much larger. The study followed a group of students for a three-year period in grades nine to twelve.

Yet, another portion of the study which analyzed census data indicated that 30% of all students who drop out of school do so before the ninth grade, i.e., before the beginning grade of the longitudinal study. For some ethnic groups, such as Hispanics, the percentage dropping out of school prior to the ninth grade was 50%.

The longitudinal study was terminated at the 12th grade level with no attempt to determine how many additional students may have left the school at this level or subsequent years without graduating.

A third factor producing conservative estimates is the use of net growth/decline figures in adjusting for changes in the high school population. The amount of change in total enrollment due to dropouts was not factored out prior to making the adjustments.

B. School districts in Texas reported differences in the definition of a school dropout and used a variety of methodologies in computing self reported dropout rates. Rates reported to the Texas Education Agency in the Annual Performance Report and following the methodology recommended by the Agency constitute one-year dropout rates rather than cumulative longitudinal rates as estimated and reported in the Texas Dropout Study.

A dropout rate reported by a school district using the entire enrollment of the district (Kindergarden-twelfth) represents the average number of dropouts at each grade level. Therefore, a reported figure of five percent would indicated that five percent of ninth graders, five percent of 12th graders, five percent of kindergarten and second grade students, etc. dropped out of school during that year. Since there are reasons to believe that few dropouts occur at the early elementary grades, rates computed by such a formula may not reflect the holding power of the school.

Instructions from the Texas Education Agency for the calculation of dropout rates have been modified, with the recommendation that districts use the secondary school enrollment figure rather than the entire district enrollment in computing the dropout rate. Districts following this recommendation will see their dropout rates doubling and even tripling this year.

G. Alfred Hess, Jr., in reporting variations in dropout reporting methodologies (Metropolitan Education, Fall 1986) uses the rule of thumb that annual reports of school dropouts should be multiplied by the number of grade levels in the study in order to convert annual reports to longitudinal figures.

Therefore district reporting dropout figures compiled on the number of students enrolled in grades Kindergraden through twelve should multiply the dropout rate by thirteen in order to make the rate comparable to a longitudinal rate. Districts using the new TEA recommended procedure of dividing the number of dropouts by the number of students enrolled in grades seven through twelve should multiply the annual dropout rate by six to produce a comparable longitudinal figure.

C. Districts using the attrition rates submitted to them as a follow up of the study should use caution in interpreting the data particularly when the number of students is exceedingly small. Though the original intent of the study was not to compute attrition rates for individual school districts, the availability of the data in calculating a state rate facilitated the calculation of attrition rates at regional, county, and local levels.

It can be assumed that attrition figures reported in the Texas Dropout Study are very valid, though conservative, at the state and regional levels, for heavily populated counties, and for large school districts. The data may become questionable in sparsely populated counties and in very small school districts. The abundance of school districts in Texas with high school enrollments of less than 200 students demands caution in local interpretation of the findings.

Similarly, ethnic breakdowns which result in very small number of students in some ethnic groups may affect the validity of attrition estimates for those groups. In a large school district with a small number of Black, Hispanic, Asian, or White students, rates for the total district population may be highly valid, but the rates for a very small number of students of an ethnic subgroup may be questionable.

D. Extenuating circumstances may exist in some school districts which should be taken into consideration in the interpretation of local attrition rates. For example, discussions with school superintendents in districts along the Mexican border indicate that there may be large numbers of students from Mexico that enroll in Texas school districts for the sole purpose of learning English. Having accomplished this objective in a year or two, the students return to Mexico and further school attendance is beyond the control of Texas school districts.

Another unique circumstance identified during the study was the effect of court ordered school desegregation on enrollment patterns. If the reaching of an age or grade level influenced by desegregation results in large, uneven distributions of students leaving or returning to a school district, the validity of attrition rates is questionable.

This finding explains the reason why the attrition study was started at the ninth grade and not at the seventh grade level as originally conceived.

Conclusion

The calculation of attrition rates for the state, regions, counties, and school districts proved to be a simple, fast, economical, and valid method of determining the magnitude of school dropouts, providing baseline data for the subsequent evaluation of prevention efforts, and providing school districts with basic information for subsequent analysis and validation.

The availability of these data should provide a sound framework for the development of educational policies at the federal, state, and local levels aimed at eliminating, or at least greatly reducing, the existing school dropout problem. ◊

UNDEREDUCATED YOUTH IN TEXAS

A Study of Macro-Community Dropout Rates

by *Dorothy Waggoner, Ph.D.*

Editor's note: *The following is excerpted from the Texas School Dropout Survey Project (Volume 1: Magnitude of the Problem — Census Analysis), which was conducted by Intercultural Development Research Association, Center for the Prevention and Recovery of Dropouts, under contract with the Texas Department of Community Affairs.*

Dropouts in Texas

Nearly half a million Texas young people, aged 16 to 24 in 1980, were not enrolled in school and had not completed the 12th grade, according to the 1980 Census. They constituted one in five of their age group in the state. Sixty percent, 301,000 of these young people, were aged 20 to 24. Somewhat more than half, 259,000 of them, were young men. Two hundred and thirty thousand were Whites, 197,000 were Hispanics and 64,000 were Blacks. The other 6,000 were Native Americans or Asian Americans.

Four hundred and twenty-seven thousand of the Texas dropouts were born in the United States. Of the 70,400 foreign-born dropouts, 88% were Hispanics, six percent were Whites and five percent were Asians or others who did not identify themselves with the major groups in Texas.

Studies of dropouts and potential dropouts in the United States usually assume that young people who become dropouts leave school between the ninth and the eleventh grades. However, not all potential dropouts reach ninth grade. This study indicates that in 1980 three out of ten Texas dropouts — 152,000 young people — had completed fewer than nine years of schooling when they left school. Twenty-seven thousand had completed fewer than five years of schooling. More than half of those with fewer than five years of schooling were foreign born. However, 104,000 of the total number of youth with no more than an eighth grade education were born in the United States.

Other findings from this study about dropouts in Texas are the following:

- Hispanic, White, and Black dropouts in Texas differ strikingly. Hispanic youth, aged 16 to 19, were twice as likely, and youth, aged 20 to 24, nearly three times as likely in 1980 to have left school prior to the completion of 12th grade as their White contemporaries.

- More alarming for their futures as productive citizens, many Hispanics have very low levels of schooling. Nearly half of the 1980 Hispanic dropouts had completed less than ninth grade when they discontinued schooling. In contrast, 82% of White and Black youth who failed to complete 12 years of schooling stayed in school at least through the ninth grade.

- Male dropouts, both those aged 16 to 19 and those aged 20 to 24, have higher civilian employment rates than their contemporaries as a whole. The differences are less for the older age group than for the younger. However, Black youth are less likely to be employed than Hispanics or Whites.

- Many more Black youth than Hispanics or Whites are "discouraged workers." Two in five Black male dropouts, aged 16 to 19, in this study, in contrast to one in five of Whites and 26% of Hispanics in that age group, were not in the labor force. Black dropouts, aged 20 to 24, were three times as likely not to be in the labor force as Whites or Hispanics, aged 20 to 24.

- Young women who have not completed high school have lower employment rates than their female contemporaries as a whole and more of them, proportionally, than their male colleagues are not in the labor force.

- Foreign-born Hispanics, especially those old enough to have come to the United States in their late teens, are very likely to have low levels of schooling. Nearly two-thirds of the 20-to-24-year-olds in this study, in contrast to less than half of the younger immigrants, had received fewer than 12 years of schooling. Seven in ten of all foreign-born Hispanic dropouts failed to complete ninth grade.

Distribution and Rates by Type and Size of Place

Nearly half of the civilian dropouts, aged 16 to 19, in 1980 lived in central cities in 1980. Altogether about four out of five of the 16-to-19-year-old civilians who had not completed high school lived in places of a least 2,500 population — urban areas as defined by the Bureau of the Census.

Other findings about the civilian dropouts, aged 16 to

19, living in specific kinds of places in Texas, are the following:

- Young civilians living in towns of 2,500 to 10,000 population are the most likely to have left school before completing the 12th grade. Among them, one in five in 1980 was a high school dropout.

- The Texas young people most likely to have graduated from high school are those few living in rural farms. Only one in 12 of the younger civilians on farms of an acre or more with a least $1,000 of agricultural income in 1979 was a dropout in 1980.

Data across geographic areas established for the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) are discussed below.

Distribution and Rates in JTPA Service Delivery Areas

The major purpose of this study was to determine the relative numbers of dropouts and dropout rates for youth, aged 16 to 24, in the 34 service delivery areas established in Texas for the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) program. Because the geographic units for which separate data are available from the 1980 Census five percent Public Use Microdata Sample coincide only in part with the SDAs, data have been allocated to the 21 SDAs which did not coincide with Census geographic units.

Major findings on the distribution of dropouts and dropout rates in the SDAs are the following:

- Texas dropouts are widely distributed throughout the state. Half of the SDAs had at least 10,000 dropouts each in 1980.

- The largest groups of dropouts were in the City of Houston with 69,000, the Alamo SDA with 40,000, the city of Dallas with 35,000 and the Balance of Gulf Coast Planning Region SDA — the area around Houston — with 32,000.

- In 1980, at least one out of five young people, 16 to 24 years of age, in the state as a whole and in 21 of the 34 SDAs had left school prior to the completion of 12th grade.

- Rates vary among the SDAs. For the 16-to-19-year-old group in 1980, they ranged from 10.9% in the South East SDA to 25.7% in the Middle Rio Grande SDA. For the 20-to-24-year-old group the range was even wider — from 9.5% in the Brazos Valley SDA to 38.7% for Middle Rio Grande.

Male and Female Dropouts

Young men in Texas are somewhat more likely to leave school before completing secondary education than young women. In 1980, there were 259,500 young men and 237,600 young women in Texas who had dropped out. The men represented 20.5% of all young men while the women represented 19.3% of young women.

The proportion of males to females differs by SDA. The largest proportion of male dropouts in 1980 — 62.9% — lived in the Central Texas SDA. Many of these young men — and their contemporaries who had finished high school — were employed in the military installations in the Killeen-Temple area. Female dropouts predominated in ten SDAs. The largest proportions of young women who had failed to complete 12 years of schooling in comparison with male dropouts were in the Cameron County and South East SDAs.

Dropout rates vary similarly for males and females. Those for male dropouts in Texas in 1980 ranged from 10.2% in the Brazos Valley SDA to 31.2% in the Middle Rio Grande SDA. For female dropouts, they ranged in the same SDAs from 10.0% to 33.1%.

White, Hispanic, and Black Dropouts

Reflecting the racial/ethnic composition of their populations as a whole, service delivery areas differ widely in the racial-ethnic composition of their dropout populations. Statewide in 1980, 46% of dropouts were Whites, 40% were Hispanics, and 13% were Blacks. In the North East, SDA, nearly eight in ten of the dropouts were Whites and virtually all the rest were Blacks. In the Cameron County and Hidalgo and Willacy Counties SDAs, nearly all dropouts were Hispanics.

Nine SDAs had at least 10,000 White dropouts. These were also the nine SDAs with the largest numbers overall: Houston, the Balance of Harris County and the Balance of Gulf Coast Planning Region SDAs around Houston; Dallas, Fort Worth and Arlington, the Balance of Dallas County and the surrounding counties in the Balance of the North Central Planning Region SDA, and East Texas and Alamo SDAs.

There were fewer SDAs with as many as 10,000 Hispanic or Black dropouts. Five had at least 10,000 Hispanics: the Alamo, Houston, Hidalgo and Willacy Counties, Upper Rio Grande and Dallas SDAs. Only one SDA had as many as 10,000 Black dropouts: Houston with 12,500. Other large Black groups lived in Harris County outside Houston and other counties surrounding Houston, in Dallas and its county and in the Central Texas and East Texas SDAs.

White dropout rates ranged from 6.2% in the Brazos Valley SDA to 24.8% in the North East SDA. White youth in the Lubbock and Garza Counties and the City of Austin and Travis County SDAS also has rates below ten percent. In contrast, Whites in the South Texas Planning Region and East Texas SDAs, in addition to those in the North East SDA, had dropout rates of more than an estimated 20%.

Most Hispanic dropout rates were over 20% and they ranged up to 51.3% in Dallas. There were 12 other SDAs in which 40% to 50% of Hispanics, aged 16 to 24, had not completed secondary school. Among the SDAs with the largest proportions of Hispanics, the rates were lower: fewer than three in ten young Hispanics in the Alamo and the Hidalgo and Willacy Counties SDAs were dropouts; about one in four Hispanics in the Upper Rio Grande SDA was a dropout.

The dropout rates for Blacks in Texas in 1980 ranged from 11.5% in the Alamo SDA to 38.7% in the SDA consisting of counties surrounding Travis County and the state capital. There were 13 SDAs in which one in five or more of young Blacks had failed to complete high school.

Foreign-Born Dropouts

The presence of foreign-born young people in Texas does not appear to make a significant difference in the numbers of undereducated youth statewide and in the majority of SDAs. In 1980, foreign-born youth constituted 14% of dropouts in the state and their numbers exceeded 3,000 only in eight SDAs in the data analyzed for this study. However, not unexpectedly, their proportions were higher in the SDAs along the border with Mexico. In 1980, they constituted 37% of the dropout population in Upper Rio Grande SDA. They were a third of the dropout population in the Cameron County SDA and about three in ten of the dropouts in the South Texas Planning Region and Middle Rio Grande SDAs.

Major findings on foreign-born youth are the following:

- Foreign-born dropouts migrate to cities. In 1980, the largest numbers were found in Houston, the Upper Rio Grande SDA, where 89% of the population lived in El Paso, Dallas and the Balance of Harris County SDA surrounding Houston.

- Foreign-born youth are nearly two and a half times as likely as native born youth to have received fewer than 12 years of schooling. In 1980, 43.8% of foreign-born young people in Texas, aged 16 to 24, were dropouts in comparison with 18.3% of their native-born contemporaries.

- The dropout rates of the foreign-born differ widely among SDAs. In the Brazos Valley, City of Austin and Travis County and Lubbock and Garza Counties SDA — all of which have relatively few foreign-born youth — the rates of this group were under 20% in 1980. In contrast, the dropout rates of the foreign-born in the East Texas, Panhandle, Dallas, South Texas Planning Region, Deep East Texas, Middle Rio Grande, and Houston SDAs were 50% or more. ◊

The Economic Impact of the Dropout Problem

by *David Ramirez, Ph.D.* and *María del Refugio Robledo, Ph.D.*

Editor's note: *The following is excerpted from the Texas School Survey Dropout Survey Project (October 1986) which was conducted by Intercultural Development Research Association, Center for the Prevention and Recovery of Dropouts, under contract with the Texas Department of Community Affairs and the Texas Education Agency.*

It is implicit in most of the literature related to dropouts that "dropping out" is detrimental to both the individual and society. Popular conceptions abound relating dropouts to increased crime, lower wages, higher unemployment, and diminished life satisfaction, to name but a few. Additionally, many argue that as employers focus greater attention on higher levels of educational achievement, the economic penalty paid by dropouts will become even more severe. Society is also said to suffer both directly and indirectly in lost productivity, a diminished tax base, greater vulnerability to foreign competition, and greater general dissatisfaction in the population. Yet to prevent or remediate such conditions, substantial financial resources must be allocated. The prevention of dropouts would at minimum require two major areas of expenditures: (a) the public education costs required to continue the education of dropouts past the point at which they would have dropped out, and (b) the cost of implementing effective dropout prevention programs. This latter expense is based on the assumption that the current educational system has failed to retain these students and hence an alternative set of programs is required to effect prevention.

The allocation of resources by society to dropout prevention programs is an investment in individual students with an implicit assumption that there will be a positive return to society as a whole. The use of benefit-cost analysis as employed in this study, represents an effort to test this assumption. Specifically, will society in general realize a fiscal benefit by providing effective education to those within society who are currently early leavers of the formal educational system?

Currently there are costs associated with dropouts. Dropouts do use educational services even though their programs are prematurely aborted. Dropouts also to tend to utilize various human services in disproportionate numbers. Further, dropouts are represented in the criminal justice system at a higher percentage then the population as a whole. Dropouts also appear to be unemployed at a higher rate, and of those that are employed, most are found in low-income jobs. Their high rate of unemployment and their overrepresentation in low-income jobs not only diminished their potential lifetime earnings but also reduces the overall federal, state, and local tax bases (*Levin, 1972*; *Catterall, 1985*). The preceding litany serves as only a partial list of cost incurred by society due to dropouts.

Phenomena such as poverty and incarceration have quantifiable societal costs associated with them. However, not all the costs in these or similar areas lend themselves to quantification. Not only is it difficult to quantify costs, it is equally difficult to categorize what the costs and benefits would be.

Many of the costs and benefits to be discussed have implications for both the individual and society. If, for example, an individual has a higher probability of going to prison if he or she is a dropout, this represents a cost to both the individual and to society. The individual pays with time, lost wages, psychological and physical pain; his or her family also loses. Society pays directly through the costs of its judicial and correctional system, and indirectly in the loss of contributions this individual could have made to the overall society. To avoid such a situation is a benefit for both the individual and society. Therefore, the elimination or curtailment of many of the costs to be detailed here can be considered direct benefits.

Psychological literature contains a great many studies demonstrating the positive benefit to the individual of having options in life. Indeed, much of the literature related to hopelessness refers to the psychological experiences of those who consider themselves without such options. The literature related to dropouts indicates that one of the negative impacts of dropping out is the limitations this act may place on the individual. The student who drops out is said to: (a) increase his or her probability of unemployment, (b) decrease the range of jobs for which he or she is qualified, (c) increase his or her probability of earning lower wages if employed (which initiates a number of concurrent negative effects associated with lower socio-economic levels), and (d) increase the chances of ending up in what many term "dead-end jobs." Each of these results has the effect of decreasing the potential options available to the individual and possibly to the family.

Negative impact on the individual is difficult to quantify with any degree of accuracy. However, it may act as a precursor to other negative impacts that are more easily measured. The relationship between crime and dropping out is often based on the notion that many individuals with limited options might turn to crime if he or she is unable to succeed in legal settings. Drug and alcohol abuse have been linked to the sensation of hopelessness in the abuser. Violence is also cited as a possible result of a prolonged sense of hopelessness.

Education is but one means of increasing an individual's options. Therefore, we must estimate the subset of cases of avoidable problems as a function of increasing education levels. Even assuming for the moment that this is only a subset of the total number of cases, there is another question: How do we ascribe a value to what was lost or suffered in these cases?

In part, a cost can be ascribed. We can, for example, estimate the costs paid by the judicial, correctional, and social welfare systems to serve the subset of individuals who, for want of an adequate education, found themselves with too few options in life. We can estimate the increase in potential positive contributions of these individuals to society had they had an adequate education. While this summary does not permit detailed discussion of all areas examined in the benefit-cost model, key areas are briefly highlighted below.

Lost Wages and Tax Revenues

Over the course of an average lifetime of earnings, differentials in earning power result in substantial losses in wages and tax revenues. In previous studies of the cost associated with inadequate education, estimates of lost wages and tax revenues have played a pivotal role. (*Levin, 1972; Catterall, 1985*). These studies support the conclusion that the costs in lost wages and tax revenues alone can serve as adequate justification for investing in the provision of a more complete education to the pool of would-be dropouts. The present study replicated the work of *Levin (1972)* and *Catterall (1985)* to arrive at an estimate of the impact of lost wages and tax revenues to Texas as a function of the dropout problem.

Numerous census reports have documented the lower annual wages earned by dropouts as compared to individuals that complete four years of high school *(U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1984; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1984)*. In the context of these issues, the central question is: How much less over the course of a lifetime will the average dropout earn in comparison to an individual that graduates from high school?

The *Lifetime Earnings Estimates for Men and Women in the United States: 1979* (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1979) was used as the primary data source in this area. The report indicates that a man with less than 12 years of education can expect, from age 18 to 65, lifetime earnings of $601,000, while a male high school graduate can anticipate earnings of $861,000. This represents a $260,000 dollar difference. Likewise, a woman with less than 12 years of education is estimated to earn $211,000 as opposed to $381,000 for a woman with a high school diploma. The difference for women is therefore $170,000. Since the current study focuses on Texas, a number of adjustments in the national figures were necessary. After adjusting for regional differences in income and a number of other factors, lifetime earnings losses of $241,630 for men and $146,072 for women were generated.

The Texas attrition rate estimates reported elsewhere in this volume were used to generate the cost figures in the area of lost wages. The attrition rate data indicates, on the basis of the size of the ninth-grade class in 1985-1986, a loss of 86,000 students. Assuming as did *Catterall (1985)*, that 52.72% of the dropouts were male and 47.27% were female, the resulting estimates are shown in Table 1.

The estimated losses in tax revenues were generated by the same method employed in previous studies. Levin *(1972)* and *Catterall (1985)* both developed an estimate of the lost tax revenues that would accompany the lost income using an estimate of 30% of income. Based on these estimates, this group of students, allowed to leave school at the rates noted, will over time result in a loss in earnings and resultant taxes of approximately $137,504 per dropout and an average loss in taxes of $58,930 per dropout.

Impact on Social Welfare Services

Virtually all human service programs exist in a climate of capital rationing in that not all those that need services can actually be provided services. The literature on human service organizations contains many pleas for the implem-

TABLE 1
Projected Total Earnings and Tax Losses to Texas Due to Projected Attrition Rates Among 1982-1983 Ninth Graders

Sex	Estimated Number of Dropouts	Individual Lost Earnings (Adj.)	Total Lost Earnings
Male	45,000	$214,630	$10.955 billion
Female	40,656	$146,072	$5.938 billion
Total gross earnings lost: $16,893 billion			
Approximate loss of tax revenues assuming all taxes represent 30% of income:			$ 5.068 billion
Estimated net lost earnings (less taxes):			$11.825 billion
TOTAL LOST EARNINGS AND TAXES			$16.893 billion

entation of primary prevention techniques in hopes of stretching the limited resources available for social problems. Hence, if a given percentage of potential clients would not require the services of these social agencies through the provision of a more adequate education, the service slots these individuals would have taken would simply be replaced by other clients in the community that needed help but would not have received it. If this is the case, there would be two levels of benefit associated with the prevention of selected cases through the provision of a more adequate education: (a) the savings in the services that would have been provided to these individuals, and (b) the fulfillment of a portion of the "unmet need" in the community that could not have been served had the resources been used on the dropouts.

The present study concentrated on four major human services program areas: (a) welfare costs, (b) unemployment costs, (c) job training programs, and (d) Adult Basic Education costs. In determining welfare costs, for example, the study involved an analysis and estimate of the impact that a lower incidence of dropouts might have on the services provided by the Texas Department of Human Services. Before reviewing some of the findings in these areas, the estimation model used will be described in a hypothetical sense to allow the reader an opportunity to examine its structure. Figure 1 (see next page) will serve as a reference point for the discussion to follow.

Let us assume that we have a social program that services 100 people every year and that a total of 1,000 people live in the community. Our first step will be to examine the percentage of dropouts found in the community as a whole and in the subset of 100 social program users. Let us further assume that upon examination we find in step two the percentages to be as follows; 20% dropouts in the total population and 75% dropouts in the social service user population. Step three simply applies the percentages to the two groups and determines that 200 of the 1,000 individuals in the overall population are dropouts and 75 of the users are dropouts. Since the users are a subset of the total, in step four we note that 75 of the 200 dropouts in the overall community showed up as users whereas 25 of the 800 non-dropouts were found to be users of our hypothetical service. In step five, we simply convert these proportions to rates per 100 in order to compare the incidence of being a user in the dropout vs. the non-dropout group. We find that the dropouts are using the service at a rate of 37.5% per 100 in contrast to the 3.1% per 100 rate shown for non-dropouts.

In critical step six, we conjecture how many of the 200 people in the community that were dropouts would have shown up for service had they had the same rate of usage as their non-dropout counterparts. If the rate of 3.1% per 100 per ascribed to the 200 dropouts we would expect to still see 6.2% individuals in the service users from the original 200. Note that 6.2% vs. 75 persons would have shown up for service. That is, 69 of the original 100 service users might not have shown up for service. To this point, the model assumes that there is a direct relationship between being a dropout and being a user of the service agency. Clearly, a perfect relationship is not in evidence or we would not have expected the original 800 non-dropouts to yield 25 users. Nonetheless, a level of relationship is in evidence given the disproportionate representation of dropouts in the user group. Assume that in only 50% of the cases would converting the 200 dropouts in the community to non-dropouts result in their exhibiting the non-dropout rate of usage. Hence, for 100 of the original dropouts the increase in education would not affect their rate of service use. However, for the remaining 100, the new rate of 3.1% per 100 would be in evidence. In step seven, we note that such an adjustment would cause a decrease of 30 persons rather than the 69 noted in step six. In essence, we have cut our original estimate of the service expenditures related to dropouts in half to adjust for our inability to isolate the exact magnitude of the relationship that exists between these two phenomenon. Given the extreme overrepresentation of dropouts in the service users, this adjustment may result in an overly conservative estimate. Nonetheless, this example of the implementation of our estimate model would result in an anticipated savings of 35% in the expenditures of our hypothetical service activity.

This estimation model was employed to generate estimates reported for the various service activities. Using this methodology, the cost attributed to inadequate education in the two social welfare programs of AFDC and Food Stamps was 253.7 million dollars ($94.8 million in AFDC and $158.9 million in Food Stamps).

It is important to note that this study is in no way considered the cumulative financial, physical and psychological costs to the children represented in these programs. If a situation of poverty could have been avoided through a more complete education for a group of the parents represented in these programs, what would the benefits have been to their children? Conversely, how many children of social welfare program users will themselves grow up to also need these services? There is evidence to support the contention that these children have a much higher probability of also needing such services when they grow up. These cumulative costs were not included in this study.

Unemployment Costs

The possible costs of unemployment insurance and employment placement services that might be attributed to inadequate education were also considered. The primary question in this area was: What will Texas spend (a) on unemployment benefits for the dropout group that might have been avoided, and (b) helping the dropout group to seek employment through the provision of job placement services?

National data indicate that the unemployment rate for dropouts in 1984 was 27.7%, or more than twice the rate for high school graduates not enrolled in college, i.e., 13.4 %

FIGURE 1

Cost Estimation Model

Step 1:

1,000 people in the general population & 100 people in the service population

Step 2: estimate % dropouts —

20% dropouts; 80% non-dropouts; 75% dropouts; 25% non-dropouts

Step 3: apply %

200 dropouts; 800 non-dropouts; 75 dropouts; 25 non-dropouts

Step 4: users to population

75 dropouts used; 25 non-dropouts used

Step 5: convert to rate

37.5/100; 3.1/100

Step 6: assume non-drop rate of 3.1/100

6.2 users; 25 users

Compare 6.2 to the figure in Step 3 (i.e. users) to the original figure of 75

Result = 69 less users or *69% savings* in expenditures.

Adjustment of inaccuracy of relationship

Step 7: recalculate with new rate for only half the dropouts

200 dropouts → 100 new rate (3.1/100); 100 old rate (37.5/100)

800 non-dropouts → original rate (3.1/100)

3.1 users; 37.5 users; 25 users

New projected total users = 65.6 vs. 100 or approximately 34% less

Final result of the model is an estimate of *34% savings* in expenditures.

(U.S. Bureau of *Labor Statistics, n.d.).* We would, therefore, expect to see an overrepresentation of dropouts in the group receiving unemployment compensation and job placement services.

Using the model described earlier, the cost savings in the area of unemployment compensation costs related to inadequate education is estimated to be $15.7 million per year. This figure represents approximately 2.5% of all the money paid out in unemployment insurance claims in 1985. In order to compare the present findings to previous studies we might note that Levin's *(1972)* estimate of ascribed costs in relation to unemployment compensation was approximately 20% of benefits. Likewise, the present study's cost estimation model indicates that 2.78% of the expenditures related to job placement services, or $1,896,286 might have been avoided had the dropout problem not existed. In total, these two areas sum to an estimated loss of $17,630,000 annually.

Crime and Prison Costs

As already indicated, previous research has attempted to estimate the cost of crime associated with inadequate education. The following three areas were considered in this study: (a) costs associated with incarceration, (b) judicial costs and the costs associated with police protection, and (c) a very rough estimate of the cost of crime to victims in the single area of stolen property. We will briefly discuss the impact on prisons since this area is often cited.

The central premise is that there exists a subset of individuals incarcerated in Texas prisons who for lack of a more complete education have committed crimes, have been convicted, and were sent to an institution with the Texas Department of Corrections (TDC) system. The phrase "convicted and sent to prison" is critical in our discussion of the costs of crime associated with inadequate education. National statistics for 1983 reported by the U.S. Department of Justice indicated that on the average, only 20.6% of the 11.4 million offenses reported were cleared by an arrest (U.S. B*ureau of Justice, 1985).* Only a portion of these arrests ever led to a conviction, and only a subset of these resulted in incarceration in a State prison. It is also of interest to note that between 1975 and 1985 the inmate population reported by the Texas Department of Corrections virtually doubled (18,151 vs. 37,320). In addition, the operating costs of TDC in 1985 (approximately $287 million) were over eight times greater than the operating costs reported in 1975 (approximately $33 million). A preliminary report of a ten-year facilities study conducted by the Texas Department of Corrections (Henningson, Durham, Richardson, n.d.) noted:

If no actions were taken to reduce the influx of new admissions or the average length of stay, the population will approach 95,000 inmates in 1995 (p. III).

The study went on to note that such an increase in the population and related costs would cause the annual operating figure in 1990 to reach about $614 million and just over one billion dollars in 1995. The projected 1990 costs are approximately double the costs noted in 1985.

That there is some relationship between education and incarceration appears to be supported by the disproportionately high number of inmates with low levels of educational attainment in comparison to the general population. Again it is impossible to establish any unequivocal measure of cause and effect between education and incarceration. We can, however, note that if the general dropout population in Texas were to have the same incidence of incarceration as the non-dropout population we would expect to see fewer people in prison. Summing all the costs we identified in relation to incarceration and education we arrived at a total of $131 million that might have been saved.

As stated earlier, the tie between crime and inadequate education is based on the concept that some portion of crime is committed by persons who, due to an inadequate educational preparation, find themselves in life conditions with limited options. National data for 1984 indicated that the unemployment rate for high school graduates not enrolled in college was 13.4% (U.S. B*ureau of Labor Statistics, n.d.).* In contrast, the unemployment rate in that same year for school dropouts was a staggering 27.7% (U.S. B*ureau of Labor Statistics, n.d.).* Not only are more dropouts out of work, they also possess fewer of the educational skills required to get a job. The number of jobs for unskilled labor is decreasing and is expected to continue to decrease. The chronically unemployed dropout might go on welfare as a means of subsistence. For some females (those with children there is the possibility of AFDC assistance. The average recipient will be provided around $4,000 per year in AFDC and Food Stamp benefits to support themselves and their children. For males, the situation is even more interesting to consider. Outside of the Food Stamp program (which appears to provide a yearly average of less than $700 per participant), what other types of program support are they eligible to receive? We could identify no other public welfare programs that would provide significant financial support to this group.

We are not asserting that being poor and possessing few if any perceptible options constitute a justification for the commission of crime. We are simply asking the reader to consider the possibility that there may be a relationship between inadequate education which often results in a constricted range of life options and crime.

Levin (1972) attributed roughly 33% of the costs of crime to the problem of inadequate education. For the present study, we used a proportion of 12.5% or a conservative estimate of approximately one third the size of that used by Levin in his 1972 study. Employing our figure of 12.5% attributable to inadequate education, we arrive at a cost estimate of $5,881,870 in relation to judicial costs and $116.1 million that might have been saved in the area of police protection through the eradication of the dropout problem.

By surveying the annual reports of a number of urban police departments in Texas, an estimate of $66/per capita in losses due to stolen property was determined. Assuming that there are approximately 14.5 million people in Texas, our cost estimate for the entire State would be nearly a billion dollars in losses in stolen property. Again using our estimate of a possible 12.5% of crime attributable to inadequate education, the cost in this area is approximately $119.6 million. In summary, the total costs related to crime/incarceration and inadequate education was estimated at approximately $367.77 million.

The Cost of Educating Dropouts

Estimating costs resulting from the dropout problem must be put in perspective in relation to the costs Texans will bear in educating this group. The costs in the follow-

ing three areas will be considered: (a) the cost of completing a high school education, (b) the cost of college for the percentage that will go on beyond high school, and (c) the cost of providing effective dropout prevention programs.

The first area we must consider is how much it would cost to complete the education of a would-be dropout. Clearly, such a cost would span a number of years. Since dropouts leave at different points in the education process, it is difficult to know how many additional years of education they require. The present study used an estimate of 3.5 additional years required.

Based on the September 1986 findings of the *Accountable Costs Advisory Committee of the Texas State Board of Education*, the yearly cost of educating a student in 1987-1988 will be $275. The committee also projected that the 1988-1989 costs will increase by slightly over 8.7% to $2,952 per student per year. Using these figures, we estimated a total cost of $10,622 for 3.5 years. The attrition study reported in this document estimated the number of dropouts from the graduating class of 1985-1986 to be 86,000. Using this figure, we arrive at an education cost of $913.5 million.

Secondly, we must consider that some of these averted dropouts may continue their education beyond the high school level. Additionally years of schooling in college would cost roughly double the annual amount for public school education per year (*Levin, 1972*). In the projection of foregone income discussed earlier, the present study assumed that of the averted dropouts: (a) 15% would complete four years of college, and (b) three percent would attend college for five or more years. Again using our estimate of 86,000 dropouts that might be averted, the resultant cost estimates for a portion of the group (30%) continuing on to college were fixed at $656.3 million.

The final cost that must be estimated is associated with the expenditures required to implement the dropout prevention efforts that would cause the 86,000 dropouts instead to complete their education. There are few models that can be cited and even fewer for which estimates of annual costs per student are available.

Let us assume that districts would have a difficult time identifying who might or might not drop out, and that their dropout prevention efforts would need to be targeted to at least 50% of the students in a given graduating class. There were approximately a quarter of a million students in the ninth grade in 1982-1983 who were later to be the graduating class of 1985-1986. Hence, half this figure, or 125,000, would be targeted for dropout prevention. Let us further assume that the prevention efforts must be applied for the entire duration of the estimated average of 3.5 years of additional schooling required by the potential dropouts. Finally, let us estimate that prevention efforts will add as much as 25% per targeted student to the overall estimated costs of public school education.

Clearly, these are liberal estimates of the costs. It is doubtful that effective prevention efforts would need to take such a "shotgun approach" in which half of all the students in a graduating class would be targeted and served. Also, effective prevention efforts might deter the potential dropout within a much shorter time period than the estimate of 3.5 years used here.

Nonetheless, using the figures of the annual costs per student in Texas schools, we calculate the costs of an additional 25% over a 3.5 year period to be $2,655 per student. If we multiply this cost by the 125,000 students in the overall prevention target group, the resultant cost is $331.9 million. Since we estimate that we are trying to avert approximately 86,000 dropouts, the figures for prevention efforts indicated above represent an average cost of $3,859 the total cost in the area of education is approximately 1.90 billion dollars.

Benefit Cost Analysis Conclusions

Having briefly reviewed the estimates on the benefits and costs shown in Table 2, let us take stock of what we have learned. The benefits are expressed in terms of: (a) the savings in expenditures in relation to welfare, crime, incarceration, unemployment insurance payments, employment services, adult education and job training services that might result from the eradication of the dropout problem, and (b) the potential gains in earnings and taxes resulting from dropouts having a higher earning potential if they become high school graduates. The costs relate to the expenditures that would be required to: (a) complete the high school education of averted dropouts, (b) pay for public costs related to the years in college that some might attend after graduation from high school, and (c) implement dropout prevention efforts.

The benefit categories total approximately $17.5 billion. The costs categories total approximately $1.90 billion. In essence, for every dollar expended on prevention and the education of the would-be dropout, nine dollars will be returned. Note also that the estimated losses in social expenditures related to welfare, crime, incarcerations, and unemployment alone amounted to $652 million. This is not far from the amount we estimate it will cost to complete the high school education ($913.5 million) of all of the 86,000 dropouts we estimated in this study. The question then is: Where do Texans wish to spend limited resources? On the basis of the staggering amount being lost in earnings and tax revenues (i.e., $16.89 billion), the choice is obvious. Indeed, it's interesting to consider how long it will take before dropout education and prevention is funded totally by the increased revenues gained by diminishing the dropout problem.

Consider that the 86,000 students lost in graduating class of 1985-1986 will result in a potential tax loss of $5.07 billion over the next 45 years. Also, the students that will

TABLE 2
Summary of Costs and Benefits

BENEFIT CATEGORIES

I. Possible savings related to:

Welfare Costs		
AFDC Costs	94.80 million	
Food Stamps	158.90 million	
Category Total		$253.7 million
Training and Adult Education Costs		
Adult Education	4.00 million	
JTPA	8.86 million	
Category Total		$ 12.9 million
Crime and Incarceration Costs		
Incarceration & Post Supervision	126.19 million	
Judicial Costs	5.88 million	
Police Protection	116.10 million	
Property Loss	119.60 million	
Category Total		$367.77 million
Unemployment Insurance & Placement Services		
Unemployment Ins.	15.73 million	
Placement Services	1.90 million	
Category Total		$ 17.63 million
TOTAL POSSIBLE SAVINGS IN RELATION TO SOCIAL EXPENDITURES IN THESE AREAS		$652.00 million

II. Possible Increase in wages and taxes

Gross Earnings:		
Male Dropouts	10.955 billion	
Female Dropouts	5.938 billion	
Total	16.893 billion	
Minus Tax Revenues	5.068 billion	
Net Earnings Loss	11.825 billion	
TOTAL LOST EARNINGS AND TAX REVENUES		$ 16.893 billion
TOTAL BENEFIT CATEGORIES I & II		**$ 17.545 billion**

COST CATEGORIES

Education & Prevention Costs		
Cost of completing high school	913.50 million	
Cost of proving dropout prevention programs	331.90 million	
Cost of college for that group that continues beyond high school	656.30 million	
TOTAL EDUCATION & PREVENTION COSTS		**$ 1.90 billion**

be lost in the class of 1986-1987 will likewise result in a loss in tax revenues of approximately $5.07 billion over the course of their 45 years in the labor force. And the pattern continues. Given the extraordinary amount being lost in taxes for each graduating class ($5.07 billion), it would not be long before the $332 million we estimated might be required for the prevention efforts estimated might be required for the prevention efforts could be funded totally from the increased tax revenues paid by the averted drop-outs. ◊

Editor's note: *References are available upon request.*

TRUSTEE OF EDUCATION AWARD

Editor's note: *On March, 1987 Dr. José A. Cárdenas, Executive Director of IDRA and Mr. Heriberto Herrera, President of Vanir Properties, were recognized by the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) for their outstanding contributions to American education. The awards were presented at the LULAC National Education Service Centers' banquet in Dallas.*

The following is a copy of the acceptance speech presented to the LULAC National Education Service Centers' conferences by Dr. José A. Cárdenas.

It is a moving occasion to be selected for this recognition and honor this evening. I am particularly honored because of the high regard in which I hold the League of United Latin American Citizens. It is with LULAC that I had the privilege to plead for the cause of bilingual education in *U.S.* v. *Texas;* it was with LULAC that I worked with in the case of the undocumented alien children (*Doe* v. *Plylar*) and it was LULAC that provided the necessary backing for many of our efforts for school finance reform in Texas and in other states.

LULAC has always been supportive of IDRA's work in the improvement of educational opportunities for children.

I look forward to a long and mutually profitable relationship in activities which continue our work; activities designed to capitalize on the American tradition of upward mobility and the achievement of personal, economic, political, and social success through education.

Just a few months ago, I had the privilege of meeting with the Texas Executive Committee of LULAC in order to provide a personal briefing on our most recent accomplishment — the most extensive and intensive study of school dropouts ever conducted in the State of Texas.

The sense of regret I felt then, I feel now, as I communicate to you the deplorable findings of our study.

The dropout rate for the State of Texas was 33%, i.e., one out of every three students drops out of school prior to the completion of ther 12th grade.

This 33% figure is an aggregate figure and does not describe sufficiently the inadequacies of education for certain populations.

A conservative estimate of the dropout rate for White Anglo students in Texas is 27%. Though this figure may be bad enough, the comparable conservative estimated dropout rate for Blacks was 34% and for Hispanics 45%.

Another depressing statistic from our study shows that 30% of all students who drop out of school, do so before the ninth grade.

For Hispanics, 50% of all students who drop out of school, drop out before the ninth grade.

This information leads us to conclude that not only do Hispanics dropout of school in greater quantities; they drop out of school at an earlier level and an earlier age.

This finding of unusually high dropout rates for Hispanics in Texas is not incompatible with dropout information from other states. In New York the dropout rate for Hispanics was 62% as compared to 20% for White Anglos.

A study by the Illinois Board of Education put that state's dropout rates at 47% for Hispanics and 17% for Whites.

Hispanic dropout rates in California — 43%; Arizona — 35%; Colorado — 33%; New Jersey — 34% — are all indicative of a massive failure of the schools in responding to the educational needs of Hispanic populations.

The political leadership of our country has stated that dropout rates for Hispanics have increased to about 50% throughout the country. I share this concern, though I will be quick to point out that the Hispanic dropout rate has not increased to 50%; it has decreased to 50%. It is not unreasonable to estimate that the dropout rate for Hispanics in the 1940s, forty years ago, was 80% though accurate data are not available, primarily because nobody really cared.

These indicators of the Hispanic's poor performance in school has led to a renewed interest in the educational performance of Hispanics, with a new cycle of research studies, program development, and pilot test programs throughout the country. Those of us that have been around the educational scene for a number of years are all too familiar with past national awakenings to the educational problems of Hispanics, the national targeting of this group for special study, the development of innovative approaches, and the implementation of new programs all aimed at the improvement of educational opportunities for this segment of the population.

Though the horror statistics, the innovative approaches and the new programs are reminiscent of past efforts, the rationale and the roles have changed. Whereas the targeting of Hispanics in the 1960s was related to the Civil Rights Movement of that era; and the targeting of Hispanics in the 1970s was related to the educational equity movement of that era, the targeting of Hispanics in the latter part of the 1980s has changed from a judicial and a political response to an economic response.

The new actor in the traditional play is the private sector, private business and industry concerned with the changing bases for the economy and the impact of educational failure on this private sector.

The change in our country from a manufacturing economy to a service and technological economy has created three basic changes which impact upon minority education.

1. Business and industry can no longer absorb even a portion of the growing pool of unschooled, untrained, cheap unskilled labor which formed the backbone of the American labor force in the past.

2. The failure of the schools to educate a large segment of the population has created a financial liability in terms of lost wages, lost taxes, incarceration, rehabilitation, welfare, and delinquency which will cost many times more than the cost of education. The popular saying, "You pay me now, or you pay me later" is not lost on the private sector, after all, it coined the concept.

3. The private sector is already experiencing problems in acquiring the skilled labor necessary for the competitiveness, and even the survival, of technology-oriented business and industry. It is anticipated that this shortage of skilled labor will become much more extensive and critical in the years ahead.

Thus we educators find a new ally in the coalition seeking improved educational opportunities for minorities, the disadvantaged and the limited English proficient.

We welcome this new ally, the private sector, into this coalition, especially since our old ally, the federal government, has very much abandoned us on civil rights as well as equity issues.

Given that the education of Hispanics in this country is characterized by massive numbers of dropouts and underachievement, the most pressing question then is: "What can we do about it?"

There are some that feel no need to do anything about it. The following quotation is from an editorial which appeared in the *Suburban Notebook*, a suburban newspaper in Austin, Texas immediately following the release of our dropout study: "... Keeping bodies in school is futile and can be damaging to other students. Dropouts often have deep personal problems which they impose in everyone around them ... According to one recent study, Hispanic students, for instance, are handicapped by church, family, and ethnic peer relationships. Is the [Austin] school district prepared to undertake a massive Americanization of the general attitudes and lifestyles of local Hispanics? ... Given the school district's current budget crisis, maybe it would be better to restrict our spending to students who *want* to stay in school."

Thank God that at least the private sector is aware of the social, political, and economic consequences of lack of schooling and is willing to address the problem. But again I ask, How do we address the problem?

The answer lies in extensive changes in the school. Extensive changes are needed in the materials and methodologies used in the instruction of Hispanics and other minorities in the schools of this country; changes in the attitudes and relationships between Hispanic students and members of the dominant ethnic group; beginning with the realization and acceptance of the most basic of premises, namely that Hispanics can, want to, and will learn if the school is only willing to accommodate them.

For instance, it is a well known fact that Hispanics are notoriously poor readers in American schools. Hispanics as a group do poorly in the development and acquisition of reading skills in school, as evidenced by any measure of reading ability in any state in the union. Hispanics as a group have trouble learning to read in California, in New York, in Arizona, in New Mexico, etc. It is axiomatic in American education that Hispanics are poor readers.

Yet Hispanics learn to read with no difficulty in Mexico. Hispanics have no trouble learning to read in Spain. Hispanics easily learn to read in Cuba, in Venezuela, in Argentina, and in every other Latin American Country. In fact, I am of the opinion that children who go to school in Hispanic countries are better readers than English speaking children in the United States.

The reality is that only in the United States, of all the countries of the world, only in the United States does the speaking of Spanish become an impediment to learning to read.

Obviously the problem is not a deficit in the Hispanic population, but a deficit in the American schools.

During the past few years I have had an opportunity to study and visit a large and growing number of programs where an unusual and extensive success has been experienced in the education of Hispanics and other minority populations.

As part of a study conducted by our staff, we looked at successful programs in San Antonio. As part of the *Texas Dropout Study* we looked at successful programs in all of Texas. As part of the Ford Foundation's Dropout Collaboratives we looked at successful programs in the Southwest. As part of the Committee for Economic Development's study on the *Education of the Disadvantaged* we looked at successful programs in the education of Hispanics and other minorities throughout the country. I have even

visited dropout recovery programs such as the Job Corp program in San Marcos and I have made several visits to LULAC's SER model Jobstart Program in Corpus Christi.

Having analyzed the characteristics of successful programs, we were able to identify a common denominator in these programs. This common denominator can become the key to turning around the education of Hispanics and other minorities in this country.

The key to the successful education of atypical populations in American schools is —**V S P**.

V is for valuing. In all successful programs for the education of at-risk school populations there is a valuing of the students in ways in which they are not valued in regular and traditional school programs.

In successful school programs, just as in LULAC National Education Service Centers, the student is valued, his language is valued, his heritage is valued, his family is valued, and, most important, the student is valued as a person.

In contrast to successful programs, traditional school programs provide rejection rather than valuing. The Hispanic students speak the wrong language, they belong to the wrong culture. As indicated in the Austin newspaper article which I just quoted, it is necessary to Americanize the Hispanic before it is possible to educate him.

S is for support. In all successful programs for the education of at-risk youth, there are support mechanisms much more extensive than those that are commonly found in regular and traditional school situations.

These support mechanisms assist the student in coping with problems which would otherwise interfere with schooling. Support mechanisms may be in the form of a program such as bilingual education which allows the student to continue intellectual development and learning in his native language as he develops proficiency in English as a second language. Or support mechanisms may be in the form of counseling services to overcome personal and social problems, or even in the form of a stipend, a scholarship or flexible scheduling which allows the students to cope with financial problems. Regardless of the form of the support mechanisms, they provide assistance not commonly available to at-risk students.

P is for parents. In all successful programs for the education of at-risk youth, parents are involved in meaningful relationships with the school, in types of relationships not commonly found in regular and traditional school situations.

It is ironic that the Austin newspaper editorial reports a study which shows that Hispanic family relationships handicap Hispanic performance in school.

Of all characteristics which anthropologists and sociologists attribute to Hispanics, in my opinion the most valuable one is the strong family relationships so characteristic in Hispanic families.

All social scientists are in agreement, sociologists, psychologists, educators, anthropologists, are in agreement that most of the social problems in this country can be attributed to the dissolution, the breakup, of the family as a social unit. Now having discovered an ethnic group with strong family structure, society is determined to destroy it as a prerequisite to Americanization, which has become a prerequisite to schooling.

The school can, and should capitalize on this strong family structure for enhancing the education of Hispanics.

The key to the successful education of Hispanics and other minorities, the key to the education of disadvantaged children, the key to the education of limited English proficient children is the application of a liberal dose of **VSP**, valuing of the individual, support mechanisms, and meaningful parental involvement in all aspects of the school program.

It really does not make sense to place a student in a LULAC NESC program or some school remedial program which provides extensive valuing, support, and parental relationships because neither the valuing, nor the support mechanisms, nor the parental relationships were present in the regular program.

It does not make sense to spend 300 to 1,000 dollars per student per year in a supplemental program which provides valuing, support, and parental relationships because the $3,500 spent in the regular program did not provide these characteristics.

A massive effort to restructure the school program by extensive staff training and retraining, revamping of instructional materials and the use of innovative teaching methodologies would eliminate the majority of the educational problems currently associated with Hispanic and minority education.

I trust that in the near future we will see a drastic change in the education of Hispanics in this country. With the formation of new collaboratives, collaboratives among educators, the private sector and parents, we can reduce the horrendous dropout rates among Hispanics, we can improved on the low levels of school achievement so characteristic of Hispanics.

I trust that LULAC, and very specifically, the LULAC National Education Service Centers will continue in your leadership role and serve once again as the catalyst for the improvement of educational opportunities for all of the children of this great country.

I trust that you will take it upon yourselves to see to it that federal, state, and local efforts to improve educational opportunities for our ethnic group will include the provision of valuing Hispanic children in all relationships with school, the provision of necessary support mechanisms, and the involvement of parents in meaningful relationships with the schools.

I thank you again for this recognition and honor which you have bestowed upon me tonight. I thank you not only in my behalf and of my family, but I thank you in behalf of IDRA staff and the national network of educators and organizations which share our commitment for educational excellence for all children. ◊

DROPOUT LEGISLATION PASSED BY TEXAS LAWMAKERS

by *Albert Cortez, Ph.D.*

Editors' note: On May 20th, 1987, the Texas Legislature adopted HB 1010. Sponsored by Representative Ramon Martinez of Houston in the House and Senator Chet Edwards of Houston in the Senate, this legislation attempts to initiate a set of interrelated state responses to the dropout problem. This article summarizes the bill's major provisions and discusses long-range implications for school district activities involving at-risk students.

For decades the State of Texas had practically ignored the fact that a significant percentage of its school-aged population was dropping out of school. In era when cheap, unskilled labor was needed for the state's agricultural and other "low-tech" industries, State and local officials saw no compelling reason to estimate, let alone address the dropout issue. However, changing economic times and employee skill requirements led to an increasing interest in the dropout problem. Activities in the area were primarily focused upon: (1) assessing the magnitude of the dropout problem in Texas, and (2) identifying/developing responses which increased school holding power for youth considered "at risk" of leaving school prior to graduation.

House Bill 72 addressed two critical areas relating to the state dropout issue. One provision required that school districts calculate and include local estimates of dropout rates in their annual performance report mandated in Section 21.258 of the legislation. A second provision called for the Texas Department of Community Affairs' coordinating a study on the magnitude of the dropout problem. Such a study would provide information on how best to formulate policies which would help reduce the dropout rate and improve levels of student achievement.

As a result of findings from the TDCA dropout report, recommendations from the Texas Education Agency, and discussions at several state and regional dropout-related conferences, Representative Martinez and Senator Edwards drafted HB 1010. Essentially the legislation attempts to increase school district involvement in and accountability for reducing the dropout rate and improving levels of academic achievement.

One critical facet of HB 1010 is the mandate for a TEA-developed, annual estimate of the Texas dropout rate. To facilitate calculation of such data, the bill calls for "standardized statewide recordkeeping, documentation school transfers by students, and follow-up procedures for students who dropout of school." The bill also requires the agency to calculate dropout rates by campus, district, county, and region for each grade level from seven through twelve, with ethnic breakdowns for each level.

HB 1010 also requires that TEA submit a report to the Governor and House Speaker no later than January 31 of each odd-numbered year. This report will include:

- the current dropout rate of students in grade seven through 12 in the aggregate and by grade level,
- projected cross-sectional and longitudinal (across years) dropout rates for each of those grades for the next five years if no action were taken,
- a systematic plan for reducing the cross-sectional and longitudinal rates to no more than five percent.

For purposes of calculating the dropout rate at the state level, the legislation provides a standard definition of a dropout, specifically a student:

(1) who does not hold a high school diploma,

(2) who is absent from the public school in which he/she is enrolled for a period of 30 or more consecutive days, and

(3) whose attendance within that period at another public, private, or parochial school cannot be documented.

The bill also calls for the creation of a dropout information clearinghouse for collecting information on dropout prevention and recovery strategies and available dropout programs and services. The clearinghouse will also be responsible for disseminating this information to providers of dropout programs and services as well as to an interagency coordinating council created by HB 1010.

The interagency coordinating council will consist of one representative from each of the following agencies, to be appointed by its Executive Director or Commissioner.

- Texas Education Agency
- Coordinating Board, Texas College and University System
- Texas Department of Community Affairs
- Texas Youth Commission

- Texas Juvenile Probation Commission
- Texas Department of Human Services
- Texas Employment Commission, and
- Texas Employment Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse.

The council is charged with "coordinating policies and services to create a network for students who drop out of school or are at risk of dropping out."

Another provision of the legislation requires that school districts designate one or more employees to serve as an "at-risk" coordinator, who shall be responsible for collecting and disseminating information regarding student dropouts and coordinating the district's program for students identified as "at risk of dropping out of school."

The bill also mandates school districts to identify at-risk students on specific criteria which consider whether the student is an adjudicated delinquent; abuses drugs or alcohol; is of limited English proficiency; receives compensatory or remedial instruction; is or has been psychologically or sexually abused; is pregnant; is a slower learner; enrolls late in school; stops attending school before the end of the school year; is an underachiever; is unmotivated, or indicates other characteristics of the at-risk student.

The legislation also mandates that "each school district shall provide a remedial and support program" for any student

(1) whose test scores on the TEAMS and other nationally standardized achievement tests are below a level designated by the State Board of Education, or

(2) who is at risk of dropping out of school.

In order for both the State and school districts to assess the relative effectiveness of the mandated at-risk programs, the legislation requires that local programs incorporate evaluative mechanisms that document the effectiveness of the program in reducing the dropout rate and increasing achievement in each subcategory of students defined as being at risk of leaving school. The bill also requires that TEA evaluate the effectiveness of remedial and support programs.

In an amendment from the State Senate, the bill reads that "it is in the interest of the Legislature that school districts support their dropout reduction programs through compensatory education or other funding sources." Since the legislation appropriates no additional monies for local programs, it is evident that re-allocation of existing resources or acquisition of additional local revenue may be required to comply with the new state requirements. The assessment of the effectiveness of programs for at-risk youth will be considered in determining the school's accreditation standing.

Though HB 1010 will not address the broad range of issues and complexities related to the dropout problem in Texas, this piece of legislation is a significant first step in addressing a long-standing state problem. What the adoption of this initial measure signals is that State leaders are no longer willing (or able) to ignore the reality of the magnitude of the dropout issue, for they recognize that the health of the State's economy is closely tied to development of a workforce with knowledge of basic skills. By focusing on the broad range of students defined as being "at risk" the bill seeks to concentrate and coordinate the delivery of preventive and remedial services to those most in need of assistance. The challenge for local school systems will be to convert abstract state policies into pragmatic, effective programs that actually improve achievement and reduce the unacceptable high dropout rate that have characterized Texas public schools.

Editor's note: *At the writing of this article, the legislation is awaiting the Governor's signature. Once the legislation is signed the State Board of Education will promulgate rules interpreting the provisions of the legislation.* ◊

DROPPING OUT

by *Joe Carroll Rust*

***Editor's note:** The following editorial appeared in the May 23rd, 1987 edition of the* San Antonio Light *newspaper. It is reprinted with permission.*

The event board at the hotel in Atlanta told of the "Ford Dropout Colaborative" meeting.

Eight months ago, I didn't know what a collaborative was, so I wouldn't have known that it was spelled incorrectly on that bulletin board.

Now I feel I know just about as much about the collaborative process as anyone in San Antonio.

We had gone to Atlanta for a most unusual meeting, one bringing together the leaders of the 21 dropout collaboratives from across the nation which are working out community dropout plans under Ford Foundation grants. I chair the San Antonio collaborative.

Put simply, a collaborative is a group working on a central problem — a task force, a coalition.

Our collaborative in San Antonio was kicked off last October, when a group of 19 businessmen, educators, officeholders, and community leaders began meeting to discuss a serious community problem — our troublesome school dropout rate.

The dropout rate in Bexar County is 36% — that is, more than a third of those students who enter high school in San Antonio leave school before graduation.

It's a community problem we must address and do something in a united way.

The dropout rate creates serious economic problems for our community and a tragic loss in human potential for those young people involved.

If only we had the foresight to provide the programs and funds up front to keep these students in school, how much better off we would be. For every $1 we spend on public education, we get back $8. Put in another way, in the long run we spend $9 to pay for the welfare programs, job training, medical programs, and prison services for that young person we didn't spend $1 on to educate in the first place.

As a businessman, I recognize that the dropout problem involves not only work and sense, but also dollars and cents — the bottom line. If we can solve the dropout problem, imagine the economic return to the business community.

Therefore, our collaborative has appealed blatantly to the business community for support.

And, we have been getting it.

The reception from all the chambers of commerce groups we have approached has been encouraging.

Although there are similarities in the dropout problem across the United States — the overriding reason for young people dropping out of school, for instance, regardless of economic or ethnic background, is a sense of helplessness, of poor performance, falling so far behind in school that the student feels he or she can never catch up — our San Antonio dropout collaborative is quite different from its 20 collaborative brothers.

The chief difference is that the San Antonio collaborative is the only one of the group which involves a third party coordinator. In San Antonio, the collaborative is under the auspices of Target '90/Goals for San Antonio, a private business facilitator/catalytic organization, as opposed to an implementing group. All the other collaboratives are established under some sort of educational organization.

And the San Antonio collaborative involves trying to marshal the plans of 15 *independent* school districts, each with its own board of trustees and a total constituency of a quarter million students in all the districts.

Most of the collaboratives are being carried out through one unified school district. One — in the Bronx in New York City — addresses the problems of one school.

Our San Antonio arrangements has been both beneficial and hampering. On the plus side, we are not tied to a closed educational system. On the minus side, we must deal with politicos — the turf — of 15 separate political entities.

During the past eight months, our collaborative has worked endlessly to overcome that problem — and we are whipping it.

Yet, from the beginning, we recognized we would have that problem.

One of our major resources from inception was a study the Intercultural Development Research Association produced for the state of Texas, showing dropout rates for some local school districts much higher than superintendents were willing to accept. Dropout rates from that study range form 18% to 47% among local districts.

Yet, we worked to convince superintendents that if, indeed, kids are our most important game, one dropout is

one too many. Numbers are only one measure of the problem, not the only measure.

The basis of the numbers game problem is that the state of Texas has neither a uniform definition of what a dropout is nor how to calculate the dropout rate. So, each school district devises its own rules.

Nor does the state have any prescribed method of tracking dropouts. A youngster can go out the front door of the school and come in the back door and there may be no record of his wanderings.

Legislation is in the works to address those problems.

Why would a newspaper editor find himself working on a problem which would seem one of educators?

It's because it is not a problem only of educators. It is a community problem. That is why we have taken every opportunity to try to raise the level of the knowledge of the community toward the problem — the hit-the-mule-across-the-head-with-a-board-to-get-his-attention approach. We have sought input from community every source.

When Target '90 officials asked me to take on the collaborative chairmanship, I did so for two basic reasons:

- The Light has a strong commitment to education. We believe it is the future. On a more selfish basis, people who are illiterate don't read newspapers.
- On a personal basis, I find it the manifestation of the search for a cause. As the father of two teenage boys and husband of a wife who is extremely active in civic matters, I recognize the importance of education. Some men become known for having the community's largest collection of the works of Winston Churchill. If I can help my family by doing just one thing to aid the community, I will have left something behind.

The collaborative has been a learning process in trying to cut through the bureaucracy, trying to coordinate a community dropout plan.

One of the most enlightening developments has been that the San Antonio and Northside school districts have set up task forces and developed their own dropout programs. Through such programs, school districts can designate one person as dropout coordinator.

Another revelation was that the folks with the Ford Foundation aren't eggheads. They are regular Joes.

By the end of September, our collaborative will have developed a detailed plan for this community to keep addressing the dropout problem. Some of the possible elements:

- A recognition by all the educators and businesses of the problem.
- A commitment by school districts to reorder some staffing priorities toward the dropout problem.
- A state commitment of funds toward the problem.
- Involvement of the parental community in solving the problem. In some neighborhoods, the parental dropout causes the school dropout problem.
- Direct input from those the collaborative serves, the students.
- An evaluation mechanism for any plan developed.
- Acknowledgement by the community and the state that the final answer is one of prevention. The problems of the at-risk student begin in the pre-kinder years. That's why there needs to be full development of pre-kinder programs in Texas, Mr. Governor.
- Businessmen need to consider guaranteed job programs for dropouts who are recovered for school.

We have worked under a $25,000 Ford grant. During the next two years, Ford will commit $1.5 million to the dropout problem. San Antonio will be applying for some of those funds as we continue studies toward implementing a community plan.

It is likely we will at some point recommend the creation of a countywide dropout prevention organization. It may be under Target '90 auspices, but that is not firmed up.

Target '90 needs the support of the business community in pledged dollars to continue to carry on such ventures as the dropout collaborative. Currently, a fund drive for Target '90 is in force.

And at the collaborative, we need moral and spoken — outspoken — support. We seek it. We welcome it.

The collaborative next meets June 2, at the Cypress Towers. Any community input is apropos at that time.

Our goal is that by the turn of the century, we in this community will not talk about the dropout problem. Instead, we'll talk about how to find the construction funds to house all those we are keeping in school.

All these words are simply to point out the dropout problem is one which affects the entire community and which cries out for a solution by the entire community. We cannot afford to act otherwise.

To paraphrase Mark Twain, a man who turned to the community for his literacy fodder, if I had more time, I would have written a shorter article. ◊

Joe Carroll Rust is Associate Editor of the San Antonio Light *and Chairman of the Target '90 Dropout Prevention Collaborative.*

EDUCATING AT-RISK CHILDREN: A TOP NATIONAL PRIORITY

***Editor's Note:** The following article is an excerpt from "Children in Need: Investment Strategies for the Educationally Disadvantaged."*

The nation must mount a campaign of "early and sustained intervention in the lives of disadvantaged children" to help them break the shackles of lifelong failure and dependency, concludes a new report released by the Research and Policy Committee of the Committee for Economic Development (CED). Allowing these children to fail, the report warns, "will not only impoverish these children, it will impoverish our nation — culturally, politically, economically."

The report, *Children in Need: Investment Strategies for the Educationally Disadvantaged*, calls for broad-scale prevention efforts for at-risk children from prenatal care through age five. It also recommends sweeping reform of the public education system to make schools more responsive to the needs of the disadvantaged and calls for targeted programs for students at risk of dropping out.

The high rate of failure among the disadvantaged underscores the need for solutions that "reach beyond the traditional boundaries of schooling to improve the environment of the child." The report urges the "earliest possible intervention with at-risk families for reasons of both compassion and cost-effectiveness."

Children in Need was developed by a distinguished panel of top business and education leaders, chaired by Owen B. Butler, retired chairman of the Procter & Gable Company. Donna E. Shalala, president of Hunter College, served as vice chairman. Mr. Butler also chaired CED's landmark 1985 study, *Investing in Our Children: Business and the Public Schools*. The project director for *Children in Need* was Sol Hurwitz, senior vice president of CED. Dr. José A. Cárdenas, Director of Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) was one of 12 national advisors to CED.

The report contends that the education reform movement of the past five years has largely bypassed the 30% of American children who are at-risk educationally. If schools impose higher standards without providing the special help needed to meet those standards, one million young people will continue to drop out each year and up to 700,000 will graduate lacking the skills to qualify for productive employment or higher education. If present trends continue the report warns, "the scarcity of well educated and well qualified people in the work force will seriously damage this country's competitive position in an increasingly challenging global marketplace."

The report calls for new coalitions of schools, business, parents and community leaders, foundations and civic organizations, and every level of government to meet this challenge, and it urges the nation to commit sufficient resources to ensure that every child has access to quality education and is able to benefit from that education. "Quality education is not an expense.... Failure to educate is the true expense," the report declares. It warns that "any plan for major improvements in the development and education of disadvantaged children that does not recognize the need for additional resources over a sustained period is doomed to failure."

The report shuns piecemeal approaches to the problems of the disadvantaged and sets forth a framework for reform that views the needs of the whole child on a continuum starting from prenatal care and extending to adolescence.

Founded in 1942, CED is a nonpartisan public policy organization that advocates innovative, long-term solutions to major economic and social problems. CED's 225 trustees, most of whom are top corporate executives and university presidents, personally study policy issues, formulate and vote on solutions, and speak out for their adoption by business, government, and the public.

Who Are the Educationally Disadvantaged?

According to the CED report children are educationally disadvantaged if they "cannot take advantage of available educational opportunities or if the educational resources available to them are inherently unequal." The report notes that many children born into poverty are handicapped by their circumstances long before they enter school.

Poor children are almost three times more likely to become dropouts, the report finds, and schools with higher concentrations of poor students have significantly higher dropout rates. Twenty-five percent of children under six and 20% of children under 18 currently live in families whose incomes fall below the poverty line.

The dropout rate is twice the average for children who live in single-parent households, which also tend to experience higher rates of poverty than other families, the report notes. In 1985, 66% of Black children, over 70% of Hispanic children, and nearly half of all White children living in female-headed households live in poverty.

A Superior Investment

Every class of dropouts costs the nation $240 billion in lost earnings and forgone taxes, the report points out. This does not take into account the billions more spent on crime control, remedial education, and health, social service, and welfare programs. The nation's high rate of dropouts and underskilled graduates combined with demographic forces will catapult the nation into a severe employment crisis, the report contends. If current trends continue, by the end of the century the nation can expect a shortage of more than 23 million Americans willing and able to work.

Despite these dire predictions, the report maintains that we know enough about what works for disadvantaged children to act now. It highlights a number of proven programs, such as Head Start preschool education and Chapter I remedial reading and mathematics programs, which have helped reduce the achievement gap between disadvantaged and nondisadvantaged students.

Such programs are a superior investment for taxpayers as well, the report notes. For example, every $1 spent on quality preschool education for the disadvantaged yields an impressive return of $4.75. However, despite the potential of Head Start to change children's lives for the better, only 20% of eligible children are currently enrolled in this program. The report urges the federal government to bring funding levels for Head Start and for Chapter I "up to levels sufficient to reach all eligible children."

Prevention Through Early Intervention

Although the educational problems of disadvantaged children are usually obvious long before they begin formal schooling, most reform efforts have focused primarily on the education system. One exception is the growing public awareness of the value of preschool for at-risk children. Nevertheless, not every child who participates in preschool benefits. The report points out that for more than one-third of these children, preschool comes too late to prevent learning problems that result from deprivation in their earliest years. Therefore, the CED report views early prevention programs that focus on infants and toddlers as critical for breaking the cycle of poverty and defeat. "Without early intervention, such children will have difficulty taking advantage of the learning opportunities available in elementary and secondary school."

The report advocates programs that involve both children and their parents, "who may be disadvantaged themselves and in need of support services to help them learn how to prepare their children for a better future."

The report urges that community support systems be mobilized on behalf of disadvantaged families and children. Efforts should include:

- Programs to encourage pregnant teenagers and those with babies to stay in school.
- Prenatal and postnatal care for pregnant teens and other high-risk mothers, and family health care and development screening for children.
- Parenting education for both mothers and fathers.
- Quality child-care arrangements for teenagers in school and poor working parents.
- Quality preschool programs for all disadvantaged three- and four-year-olds.

Restructuring the Foundations of Education

"There is little sense in giving children a head start if the schools that await them fail to provide the kind of quality educational programs that can reinforce early successes," the report cautions. Yet, in too many communities, "schools act as vehicles of alienation rather than education," with high school dropout rates typically ranging from 30% to 50%

Nevertheless, the report warns that "incremental reform within the traditional structures" of the nation's public schools will only result in more disadvantaged children continuing to fall through "the cracks of an outmoded education system."

The report regards a "fundamental restructuring" in organization, management, staffing, and financing a top priority in schools that serve the disadvantaged. School restructuring plans should include:

- *School-based management* that involves principals, teachers, parents, students, and other school personnel in shared decision making and accountability for results.

- *Teachers who have made a commitment* to working with the disadvantaged and who have expertise in dealing with children with multiple problems. "We are concerned with the expected shortage of quality teachers and, especially, minority teachers."

- *Smaller schools and smaller classes* that can raise achievement levels and increase interaction with teachers and other adults.

- *Support of preschool and child-care programs* by the school system where appropriate for the community.

- *Up-to-date educational technology* to provide new learning opportunities for students and additional pedagogical support for teachers.

- *Support systems within the schools* that include health services, nutritional guidance, and psychological, career, and family counseling.

- *Increased emphasis on extracurricular activities* that help build academic, social, and physical skills.

The report supports greater parental involvement in the schools and recommends that schools make special efforts to reach out to parents and the community. "Many disadvantaged children do not receive reinforcement in their home lives for the positive traits that will lead to future employability," the report suggests. School improvement programs that require the active participation of parents can make substantial difference in the "curriculum of the home." Parents can be taught to provide a home atmosphere more conducive to learning, and newly motivated parents can both contribute to increased community support for that school and encourage other parents to become active.

Retention and Reentry

"Millions of students reach high school age already lost to the system," and too many of them "join the legions of dropouts who have few job prospects and little hope for the future." Because their needs and skill levels vary so greatly, this group is the most difficult for which to make generalized prescriptions, the report points out. Programs designed to meet the particular needs and deficiencies of these young people should:

- Combine work experience with education in basic skills.

- Operate in an alternative setting that focuses on improving motivation, skills, and self-esteem.

- Provide continuity in funding and long-term evaluation of the success of the program and the progress of participants.

The report identifies several programs that are making inroads with disadvantaged youth, including the IDRA and Coca-Cola sponsored Valued Youth Partnership program in the Edgewood, Harlandale, and South San school districts in San Antonio.

Building Partnerships: Schools, Business, and the Community

In the past few years, business has come to recognize its important stake in helping public schools improve the way they prepare young people for the future. The report urges businesses to expand their traditional partnership models and focus more sharply on the needs of disadvantaged children. First and foremost, the report calls on business leaders to "become a persuasive voice for the millions of disadvantaged children who lack advocates in the political process."

The CED report urges the business community to take the lead in encouraging and supporting higher funding levels where they are needed both for early prevention programs and for general support of the public education system.

The report describes various strategies that businesses and individual business leaders are taking to demonstrate their commitment to improving education. In addition to traditional adopt-a-school approaches, business is now supporting early prevention efforts, offering jobs and college tuition to needy students who complete school, and providing mentoring relationships.

The report also calls on businesses to promote employee participation in local school district activities and encourage qualified corporate leaders and managers to take an active role in the local and state policy-making process through participation on school boards.

Finally, business should support the involvement of parents in their children's education. The report recommends that corporations provide release time and flexible schedules for employees who must attend to their children's educational needs or who want to serve their local school system as volunteers. The report notes that such corporate support is especially important for hourly and other nonmanagerial employees.

Governmental Responsibility

"Without equity, there can be no real excellence in education" the report argues, and it calls on the federal government "to reaffirm its long-standing commitment to ensuring the disadvantaged access to quality education."

The CED report urges the states to continue their education reform initiatives with primary focus on children in need. States should assure "adequate and appropriate funding" for school districts that serve the disadvantaged. However, the report cautions the states not to supplant local authority. "Local school districts and individual schools should be provided with enough discretionary power so that programs are kept small in scale, remain manageable and flexible, and are able to be individualized."

However, the report adds, local school districts need to be "accountable to the community and to the education authority of their state." In each school "accountability for student performance should extend to principals, teachers, and parents."

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Impact of the Valued Youth Partnership Program

by *Roy Lee Johnson, M.S.*

The Valued Youth Partnership (VYP) Program began operation in 1984 with the support of Coca-Cola USA. The VYP Program — which was designed for middle and high school students who are at high risk of leaving school — was implemented during the 1986-1987 program year in Edgewood, South San Antonio, and Harlandale school districts in San Antonio, Texas, in collaboration with Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA). The general purpose of the program is to keep students in school and improve their self-concept, school citizenship, attendance, and achievement in the basic skills.

Specifically, the VYP Program is designed to accomplish the following objectives:

- Student tutors will demonstrate improved self-concept as evidenced by pre- and post- participation instrument.
- Student tutors will demonstrate improved school attendance as evidenced by a comparison of current year and prior year school records.
- Student tutors will demonstrate a consistent rise in academic grades in basic skill areas as evidenced by a comparison of current year and prior year grades.
- Elementary students who are tutored and their student tutors will exhibit more acceptable school behavior as evidenced by a reduction in referrals for disciplinary action as contrasted with the previous school year.
- Elementary students who receive program tutoring will demonstrate improved class performance as evidenced by class grades and teacher verification.

During the 1986-1987 program year, the program was in its third year of operation. The program was implemented at one high school and one middle school in the Edgewood school district, one high school and two middle schools in the South San Antonio school district, and one middle school in the Harlandale school district. The program was implemented for the first time at one middle school at South San Antonio and a middle school at Harlandale during the 1986-1987 program year. One hundred fifty-three student tutors and approximately 460 elementary students were served by the program during its third year of operation.

The internal evaluation of the program was conducted by the Research and Evaluation Division of IDRA. The purposes of the evaluation were to assess the extent to which the program was implemented as planned and to measure the impact of program activities on student participants.

During the 1984-1985 school year, 25 high school students each at the Edgewood and the South San Antonio school districts were selected as participants and tutored approximately 150 elementary school students. Of the 50 student tutors, only three (about six percent) dropped out of school.

During the 1985-1986 school year, 50 high school students at each Edgewood and South San Antonio districts and 50 junior high school students at each of the above schools participated in the program. They tutored approximately 300 elementary students. Of the 100 junior and senior high students involved in the program, only six (six percent) dropped out of school.

In the 1986-1987 school year, 52 junior and senior high school students at Edgewood, 75 junior and senior high school students at South San Antonio, and 26 junior high school students at Harlandale participated in the program. Approximately, 460 elementary school students received tutoring services. Of the 153 junior and senior high students who participated in the program, only three (two percent) dropped out of school. Over the three year period, the dropout rate is an amazingly low four percent.

Based on quantitative data collected and analyzed during the evaluation, most of the students who participated in the third year of program implementation demonstrated improved performance in English and Mathematics. One teacher/coordinator of the program reported that beginning the 1986-1987 school year, 14 students had not passed the TEAMS test but that by the end of the year 13 of those same students had passed the test. The one student who failed the test passed the math section but failed the writing section. Further, school absences and disciplinary referrals for program participants generally declined over the course of the year.

The following results highlight the positive impact the program had on specific aspects of students' school life.

- Approximately two-thirds of the students scored a 70 or above in English and Mathematics.
- Students generally scored higher in English than in Mathematics or the composite grade average.
- Overall, most tutored students experienced an increase in grade points after receiving tutoring although a few also experienced some decline in grade points.
- About three-fourths of the students were absent about two days or less per six weeks period during the school year.
- Disciplinary action referrals such as being tardy and skipping classes were low at the beginning of the year and became non-existent for the third through sixth grading periods.
- Three of the 153 students in the program dropped out of school. This two percent rate is well below the 45% rate calculated for Hispanic students in Texas.

Campus personnel and parents of tutors were also surveyed on the program's impact. Data were collected from middle school and high school teachers as well as elementary teachers of tutored students. Perceptions of program participants and program teachers/coordinators were also elicited and analyzed. Results from the teacher survey are presented below.

District 1 Responses (South San ISD)

When asked to list any changes in tutors' attitudes towards school, peers, and themselves, teachers from the elementary, middle, and high school campuses observed improved attitudes toward school, better attendance, and a willingness to learn on the part of tutors. Some teachers noted that the tutors seemed to improve their attitudes towards school almost from the beginning of their participation. Others did not observe any changes regarding attitude changes towards school.

Regarding attitude changes toward peers, several teachers noted that the tutors were respected and related better with their peers as a result of participating in the program. Some teachers noted that communication between students had improved since their participation in the program.

In terms of personal attitude changes, several teachers noted that the tutors had a greater sense of worth, more self-confidence, and had become more open and outgoing. According to some teachers, the improved self-confidence of the tutors appeared to "rub-off" on the students they tutored.

When asked how the program had an impact on the students wanting to stay in school, several teachers noted that the students seemed to be more responsible, not only for themselves but also for the student they tutored. Several teachers noted that attendance in school and tutoring sessions had been good and that tutors looked forward to helping the students. Several teachers noted also that tutors had expressed future aspirations of continued schooling or preparation for an occupation.

Most teachers observed that incidences of misbehavior on the part of tutors had decreased as a result of program participation. Some noted no change or that discipline had not been a problem. Teachers also commented that students were generally well disciplined, punctual, and followed directions. Teachers of tutored students noticed that tutors were well behaved in the classroom, worked well with the elementary students, and showed an eagerness in helping the students they tutored.

When asked to share the positive and negative comments heard from other faculty members concerning the program, several teachers noted that there were no negative comments. The few negative comments included some tutors who did not arrive on time, were absent and had to be told what to do.

A review of positive comments revealed that students were polite, responsible, courteous, and helpful. The majority of responses from the teachers of tutored students revealed that teachers appreciated the extra help that the tutors provided, thus enabling them to serve more students effectively.

When asked to list any changes or recommendations for the following year, several of the teachers noted they would like the tutoring time extended. Other recommendations included insuring that tutors arrive on a timely basis, meeting with tutors to explain expectations, and review lesson plans, and more counseling and supervision of tutors.

District 2 Responses (Edgewood ISD)

Teachers from District 2 observed better behavior and greater interest in school on the part of tutors. Two teachers noticed that students had become more involved in extracurricular activities at their schools.

Teachers also noted attitude changes toward peers; students enrolled in the program improved their peer relationships. Furthermore, these students served as role models to their peers in the completion of homework assignments and even took more time to assist some of their peers with their assignments.

Teachers also observed that students seemed to be more responsible, thought better of themselves, and were more secure, independent, and confident. Other comments revealed that students dressed nicer, felt special because they were earning money and had a job, and viewed tutoring as experience for future jobs.

The program also had an impact on the students wanting to stay in school; they worked harder to bring up their grades and felt better about themselves. Two teachers felt that students improved their reading abilities. The positive attitudes that students developed was felt by teachers to motivate them to stay in school.

While personnel from the elementary, middle, and high school campuses observed that there had been a decrease in the incidences of misbehavior on the part of the tutors, an almost equal number felt there had been no change; only one teacher indicated there had been an increase in such incidences.

When asked to share any negative comments heard from other faculty members concerning the program, most respondents had none. The few who listed negative comments indicated that some tutors didn't take their jobs seriously; all teachers should have access to student tutors; and some students were not always knowledgeable in the subject area.

Teachers also made the following recommendations:

1. Teachers should review the subject matter that the tutors will be teaching.
2. Tutors should be screened better.
3. Tutoring time with students should be increased.
4. Teachers should provide better orientation.

Overall, most of the comments were favorable. Teachers felt the tutors were helpful and motivated the youngsters. Most of the teachers also believed that the tutors worked well with the students and served as role models for their students.

It is clear from these results that the VYP program had a positive impact on student self-concept, outlook on life, social skills, and the student's desire to learn and, importantly, to remain in school.

Formulating a Plan For Dropout Prevention

by *José A. Cárdenas, Ed.D.*

The national and state concerns over the number of students that are not completing a high school education has resulted in dropouts, and the student population at risk of dropping out of school, becoming a priority concern in education.

In Texas, House Bill 1010, enacted in 1987 provides the educational system with a clear mandate for the implementation of a program for the identification of at-risk children and the development of school responses for diminishing the likelihood of these children becoming school dropouts.

Most school districts have responded to the State mandate for the appointment of an "at-risk coordinator," established a more uniform system for determining the extent of the problem, and are in the process of developing a "plan of action" which will guide the district in addressing the problem.

The development of a district's plan of action can be a difficult undertaking. The reasons for students dropping out of school are pervasive. The reasons are multiple, and they are interrelated.

A simplistic plan cannot address adequately a large and complex problem. The plan of action must be comprehensive, coordinated, and involve the commitment and the efforts of all segments of the school district.

A commitment of the school board or the top level administrative officers has little chance of success unless it is accompanied by an equal commitment and effort by the practitioners in contact with the target population. On the other hand, a strong effort by teachers and support personnel can be dissipated in the absence of district policy or a failure in the allocation of the necessary resources in support of the effort.

A plan of action for the high school may prove unsuccessful in that in many school districts the highest incidence of students leaving school takes place at the middle school level. On the other hand, a plan for the middle schools may be unsuccessful if the academic underperformance, which is so characteristic of school dropouts, develops during the early elementary school years.

In order to facilitate the difficult and complex task of developing a comprehensive campus or school district plan for addressing the dropout problem, it is desirable to organize responses into discrete areas. The use of these subdivisions will allow school personnel to assess existing conditions in the school system, determine the extent to which that portion of the school plan has been addressed, identify areas in which further action is required, and proceed with the development of additional school responses addressing the dropout problem.

The following categories of areas of activity when broken down into five organizational school levels form a matrix with 50 cells (see Figure One on following page) which can be used as a framework in the development of the action plan for the school district. Key phrases have been provided in each of the ten categories to assist in the initiation of the planning process.

Areas of Dropout Prevention Activity

1. *Philosophy of Education*
   The district, its staff, and programs display a philosophy which is conducive to all students succeeding and staying in school.

   The district is *committed* to the prevention of school dropouts and will provide the necessary support and resources for addressing this problem.

   The district is aware that the solution to the dropout problem requires new and different behaviors on the part of the at-risk student, as well as on the part of the school system.

   The district is willing to change traditional concepts and practices in order to facilitate student success, continuation in school, and eventual successful completion of schooling.

2. *Governance*
   The district reviews policies for ways in which such policies may impact on student continuation in school.

   The district identifies any existing barriers which may impede student success and continuation in school.

   The district considers alternative and new policies, procedures, rules, regulations, programs, and organizational patterns conducive to dropout prevention.

3. *Scope and Sequence*
   The district analyzes existing programs to determine the extent to which they are responsive to the needs of at-risk students.

   The district expands its services to facilitate school attendance and success for students in unique circumstances.

   The district seeks new partnerships with business and community agencies for providing resources and support mechanisms conducive to school success and completion for at-risk students.

   The district implements new services in support of

at-risk students. These new services may include pre-natal instruction and care, extension of pre-school programs, alternative programs for problem students, alternative schools, special programs for pregnant teenagers, child care services, etc.

4. *Staffing*
School personnel identify the staff competencies and skills needed in programs addressing the needs of at-risk students.

The administration identifies, recruits, and assigns adequately prepared staff to regular programs and special programs for at-risk students.

The district utilizes flexible and differentiated staffing patterns in order to address the problem of educating at-risk students.

The district implements a program for the in-service training of new staff and for staff assigned to new, innovative, and model programs to be used as dropout prevention strategies.

5. *Curriculum*
The system conducts an analysis of the existing curriculum and determines ways in which it may not be adequate for at-risk students.

The district identifies, acquires, adapts, and modifies curriculum in order to make it appropriate for at-risk students.

The district develops and implements new programs and school offerings which respond to the characteristics and needs of at-risk students.

6. *Co-curriculum*
The district uses co-curricular activities to attract and retain at-risk students, particularly those students who appear to be isolated from their peers and have few personally rewarding experiences in school.

The district deemphasizes demonstrated talent and emphasizes student need as a criterion for student participation in co-curricular activities.

7. *Student Personnel Services*
School personnel provide guidance, counseling, mentoring and other services as support mechanisms to assist at-risk students in coping with personal, family and academic problems.

8. *Non-instructional Needs*
All school personnel assist the student in meeting basic physiological and psychological needs not directly dealt with instructional programs.

The school system networks with other community institutions for the provision of services which can diminish the impact of personal, family, and social problems on school performance.

9. *Parental Involvement*
School personnel develop and increase opportunities for positive communications with parents.

The district develops and implements special programs to assist parents in providing the home support necessary for school success. These special programs can include parenting training, adult basic education, adult English development, family literacy programs and others.

10. *Evaluation*
The school system provides: (a) for the acquisition of timely and pertinent information on at-risk student needs and performance for diagnostic and prescriptive purposes, and (b) sufficient feedback mechanisms givings immediate and strong positive reinforcement to students immediately following satisfactory performance.

The district implements: (a) a systematic process of continuous self-evaluation in order to provide for the successful education of at-risk students, and (b) an accounting system which monitors the success of its efforts in dropout prevention. ◊

Figure One
Areas of Dropout Prevention Activity

	Preschool	Elementary School	Middle School	High School	Adult
1. Philosophy Of Education					
2. Governance					
3. Scope and Sequence					
4. Staffing					
5. Curriculum					
6. Co-curriculum					
7. Student Personnel Services					
8. Non-instructional Needs					
9. Parental Involvement					
10. Evaluation					

The Trials and Tribulations of Learning Science and Mathematics by At-risk Students

by *Wendy Schwartz*

Editor's Note: *The following article is reprinted with permission from the ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education. The information presented by Ms. Schwartz reflects the issues and concerns focused upon by IDRA.*

Increasingly, applicants for the best employment opportunities will need a good grasp of science, mathematics, and computer technology. However, minorities, women, and other disadvantaged groups have not excelled in these areas. Why is this so? What can be done to increase the scientific and mathematics literacy and achievement of these groups? These are important educational concerns now.

Successful attempts to reverse this situation have been made in recent years, and as a result, a range of educational policies, programs, and methods to teach science and mathematics effectively have been identified and are now in use around the country.

Why Some Students Have Achievement Problems

Cognitive Differences. How individual students process the information they receive, and approach problem-solving, vary greatly. Research has shown that within certain groups of students (i.e., minorities and women) most learn in a similar way, but in a way different from that defined by educators as the norm (i.e., the way White males learn).

Because it is only this "normal" way of learning that has helped to inform curriculum development, large numbers of students, and possibly the majority of some student groups, have failed to master science and mathematics coursework.

Family Stress. Students whose family life is in turmoil suffer the effects of this stress in several ways. First, parents under pressure, even if it has nothing to do with childrearing, are severely hampered in their ability to help their children with schoolwork.

Second, students themselves internalize family stress, and as it lowers their self-esteem, their ability to learn in school is inhibited. The prime sources of family stress of many children at academic risk are poverty and unemployment, and the other social problems they engender.

Racial and Cultural Bias. The belief that certain students cannot excel at science and mathematics can easily become a self-fulfilling prophesy. Racial minorities have long been subject to this bias at school, where teachers treat them differently from White students by encouraging them to take less challenging, nonacademic courses. Teachers may believe that, given a history of low minority student achievement in science and mathematics, and possibly employment discrimination, it is better to prepare minority students for the jobs that will probably be available to them than to prepare them for other jobs usually held by White men.

The lack of minority role models in technical fields suggests to teachers that their beliefs are valid, and suggests to students that they have little if any chance of succeeding when no other minority person had done so in the past. In addition, some minority students may be further hampered by their parents' diminished ambition for them, the result of their own lack of success in the world of higher education and employment.

Students whose first language is not English, or is a non-standard English dialect, may have difficulty in understanding not only the words used to teach but also the cultural context of the learning material. Bilingual curriculum has, for the most part, been limited to the most basic subjects, so students have not even been given the opportunity to learn higher level science and mathematics in the language most familiar to them. Several studies have demonstrated that bilinguals have more difficulty than monolinguals in solving mathematics problems requiring semantic processing.

Other cultural differences exist between the way students are expected to behave at home and at school. An example is Native American children who, when at home, are expected to be silent before a powerful adult and are never singled out for praise or censure. At school, where students are expected to respond to their teacher's individual attention, these children are not comfortable participating in such interaction and find learning more difficult.

It has been a longstanding belief that female students cannot grasp higher level science and mathematics, and they have been encouraged not to take such courses. If they do take them, they are frequently ignored; teacher attention is concentrated on the male students who are assumed more likely to purse careers in these fields. A lack of women role models has also discouraged female students from pursuing science or mathematics careers, as has the idea that women professionals in these fields are not as "feminine" as say, women teachers or social workers. Here, as in minority families, parents' negative or outdated attitudes

can suppress any ambitions for a career in technology that girls may have. According to a recent studies, by the time they reach high school most female students have already lost their interest in mathematics and science as a result of social pressure and an earlier lack of achievement in these areas.

Disability. Though scientific and technological literacy is particularly important for improving the quality of life of the handicapped, their chances of achievement in these areas are limited. Frequently they are "tracked" out of courses because of a misconception that they cannot function safely in a laboratory or could never work in a science setting.

Tracking. The bias experienced by groups of students is not only the result of individual teachers' or parents' conduct. Bias has been institutionalized in the school through tracking. Just as minorities may be steered away from an academic curriculum and girls from technological courses, students who exhibit any kind of learning difficulty (the result, for example, of the above-discussed family stress) may be counselled to take less challenging classes instead of encouraged to work harder to master the more difficult ones.

Such tracking can begin in the early grades, with the unfortunate result that students do not get the educational building blocks they need for more advanced learning later in their school careers.

How to Promote Achievement in School

Many components of programs that successfully teach mathematics and science to students have now been identified. While some of these are also aspects of the more general effective school principles, others uniquely respond to the needs of minorities and women.

High Quality and Long-Term Programs. Most successful special programs start early and continue through the schooling of targeted groups. It is important for students to be taught from the start the personal importance of learning science and mathematics. Moreover, the emphasis of science and mathematics curricula should be on enrichment, rather than on remediation, and should allow students the opportunity for hands-on experience.

Early introduction to computers and ongoing hands-on experience have been identified as essential to later computer literacy in women, for example. Programs should be enhanced through enlistment of universities, businesses, and the community in cooperative efforts.

Frequent evaluation of programs also increases effectiveness, for changes can be made along the way to capitalize on the most effective aspects of the program and to delete from its aspects which do not promote achievement. Finally, a diversified funding base helps ensure program longevity and continuity because, if one source fails to renew support, others can help carry the project while additional funds are sought.

High Quality and Diverse Staff. Essential to an effective program are a strong principal and director, and competent teachers who all believe in students' ability to learn and who are committed to removing educational inequities related to sex, race, ethnic background, and disability. Staff at all levels need to be recruited from the target populations. Further, they should strive to introduce students to other role models of both sexes and with backgrounds similar to theirs.

Recontextualization. In order for students to learn, it is important for them to both understand the material presented, and relate it to their own lives. To accomplish the former, the curriculum must be structured to take into account students' cognitive differences — that is, to create learning tasks that can be mastered through use of students' innate ways of understanding information.

Learning is also easier when presented in the context of students' own lives. This can be done by embedding the information to be taught and the problems to be solved in a context the students are familiar with. Once students realize how they can make immediate and practical use of what they are learning their attention will increase and, therefore, so will their comprehension and retention.

Making personal connections requires that the curriculum take account of students' cultural and ethnic diversity, and that teachers have knowledge of and respect for it. For example, a classroom guide presented at the Michigan Annual Hispanic Education Conference is designed to interest Hispanics and American Indians in the sciences by focusing on significant non-Western contributions to civilization.

Relating science and mathematics learning to future careers, and demonstrating the growing importance of mastery in these areas to nearly all employment opportunities, is another important way of demonstrating the relevancy of these subjects. In the past, the connections between early course decisions and later career choices have not been clearly shown to students.

The value of good science and mathematics education is not limited to students who aspire to white collar careers; even those students planning to enter vocational programs — and female students are now being especially encouraged to consider these nontraditional alternatives — will need a good foundation in mathematics.

Cultural and Language Sensitivity. As indicated above, teachers must understand and take into account the cultural factors that inform students' ability to learn. For example, children used to assuming responsibilities and functioning autonomously at home will learn better in more independent situations. Similarly, students used to using a nonstandard method of communicating should be allowed to learn and express themselves in that way. Of course, teachers must be sure that students fully comprehend their own speech, and must be willing to "translate" if necessary.

Bilingual classes in advanced science and mathematics can be crucial to students' mastery of these subjects. Frequently, students who appear to understand English can't comprehend it in more advanced or technological classes, so their failure in these classes may be the result of a language gap rather than a cognitive deficiency.

Anxiety-Reducing Strategies. Traditionally, the teaching of mathematics, with its focus on arriving at a correct answer before one's fellow students do, creates a competitive classroom atmosphere that provokes anxiety in some students. Northeast EQUALS, a project that conducts mathematics workshops, uses a cooperative approach that eliminates the stress of competition and the value conflict experienced by females and some minority groups students who value cooperative social interaction. Instilling in students the belief that they can succeed also helps reduce anxiety.

The parent organization of Northeast EQUALS, operated by the Lawrence Hall of Science at the University of California, Berkeley, offers a wide range of materials for teachers and students that stress the potential for students to master science, engineering, math, and computer technology courses.

In addition, the Teacher Education and Mathematics project has developed Teacher Education and Mathematics Education modules that acquaint elementary school teachers with possible sex bias problems that might occur in the teaching of math, and offers curriculum guides for overcoming these problems particularly and reducing mathematics anxiety generally.

Improved Programming. Many studies have demonstrated that student learning — no matter what the subject — increases as class size decreases. Smaller class size means more interaction between students and teacher. It has also been well documented that students learn better when in closer contact with teachers — or paraprofessionals, parent aides, student tutors, and others present in the classroom for the purpose of working with students — than when doing "seatwork."

Increased time on task is another way to improve learning. More time for learning can be carved out of the school day by limiting teachers' administrative tasks and monitoring students' activities to ensure that they have the time that they need for each learning task. Developing learning activities that take less time to master is also a way of freezing time in the day for additional learning tasks; recontextualization, described above, often results in more rapid learning, thus allowing more material to be covered in a day.

Cooperative Student Groupings. Though most science teachers rely on a textbook for their course outlines, and use the lecture method of teaching, unique studies have shown that a hands on, inquiry-oriented science curriculum is far more effective. Such a curriculum can best be used when students are divided into small mixed ability cooperative groups, with each functioning independently to accomplish learning tasks, solve problems and achieve a continually evolving set of goals. Since teachers necessarily can offer only limited time to each group, the tasks assigned, and resources provided must lend themselves to independent learning with only intermittent teacher input.

It is also important for the groups to be truly heterogeneous; groups comprised of primarily historically poor learners are unlikely to be effective. To prevent group domination by higher status students, teachers must intervene to ensure that all students have an opportunity to shine within the group at one time or another. This can be accomplished by giving lower status students individual training in areas in which they would not ordinarily be expected to excel and then letting those students train the others in the group. The principle of heterogeneous groups applies to computer education where students are frequently paired. Cross-sex and mixed ability pairings have resulted in more effective learning than have random pairings.

How To Increase Learning Through Out-of-School Programs

To provide at-risk students with effective science and math education not provided in school, or to supplement school programs, both schools, and organizations have begun to offer independent programs. Increasingly, museums, zoos, planetariums, aquariums, and other institutions are providing students with educational enrichment; this may well be the beginning of a trend for schools to be just one source among many of students' educational experience.

Some organizations have programs for one specific group of at-risk students. For example, programs for female students include Operation SMART (Science, Math, and Relevant Technology) of the Girls Clubs of America, and the Women in Science project of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. There are also

special programs for minority students, including the Education Initiative of the National Urban League, which is comprised of individual enrichment programs in science and math, as well as other curriculum areas, and is administered by local affiliates; and Project MICRO (Minority Computer Resources Opportunity) of the Southern Coalition for Educational Equity, which introduces computer uses to minority students, their parents, and their teachers.

How Parents Can Help Their Children

Parents must offer their male and female children equal encouragement and equal opportunities to participate in science and mathematics experiences. In fact, providing children with hands-on experience — as simple as involving them in the math required of household budgeting — demonstrates its relevancy. Minority and poor parents must convey to their children the real possibility of a career in science or mathematics regardless of whether there are relevant role models in the family, the neighborhood, or the workplace.

Working with other parents to improve the science and mathematics education offered in schools; investigating locally available resources, such as computers in the local library; and finding out about out-of-school programs and helping to enroll their children in them are also supportive actions for parents to take.

Finally, parents can encourage learning by participating in joint learning experiences. For example, the Center for the Development of Non-Formal Education in Austin, Texas, offers parents and their children bilingual computer education. In Irvine, California, there is a cable television call-in program after school that answers students' academic questions, and in Los Angeles the public television station airs a Homework Hotline; parents can, optimally watch and discuss these programs with their children, or at least make viewing them part of their children's nightly homework. ◊

ATTRITION RATES FOR STATE SCHOOLS SHOW INCREASE

by *José A. Cárdenas, Ed.D.*

In October 1986, the Texas Department of Community Affairs and the Texas Education Agency released a study conducted by Intercultural Development Research Association of student dropouts in the State of Texas.

One aspect of the study was an estimate of school dropouts at the State, county, and district level based on high school student attrition over a three-year period, from the ninth grade class in 1982-1983, to the 12th grade class in 1985-1986. The study indicated that an estimated 33% of the students in the group dropped out from all Texas high schools during that period.

The longitudinal attrition rate derived in this study is the cumulative amount of student decline during the three-year period and is not comparable to the annual rates calculated and reported by school districts.

A subsequent study for the next group moving through Texas high schools has just been completed. The study compares the ninth grade class in 1983-1984 with the 12th grade class in 1986-1987.

Using an identical methodology, the new study indicates a longitudinal attrition increase in the State of Texas of one percentage point, from 33% to 34%, a three percent state-wide increase.

Texas Education Agency enrollment figures from district enrollment reports indicate that 826,176 students were enrolled in Texas high school grades ninth through 12th in 1983-1984. Three years later, in the 1986-1987 school year, there were 871,725 students in Texas high schools, an increase of 45,549. During this same period the class of 1987 decreased from 252,964 to 177,037, a loss of 75,927 students, or 34% of the ninth graders, as adjusted for the increase in the high school population.

Further analyses on the basis of ethnicity, race and sex indicate a 3.7% decrease in the attrition of white, non-Hispanic students, from 27% to 26%. On the other hand, Hispanic attrition increased by 2.7%, from 45% to 46%, and the attrition of black students increased 11.8%, from 34% to 38%.

The attrition rate for total males, 35%, and the attrition rate for total females, 32%, did not change from 1985-1986 to 1986-1987.

Increases in attrition rates in the State's large urban counties parallel the three percent State increase, and may account for much of it. The following changes were noted in the six largest urban areas:

County	85-86	86-87	Change
Nueces	26%	30%	+ 15.4%
Bexar	37%	39%	+ 5.4%
El Paso	38%	40%	+ 5.3%
Tarrant	29%	30%	+ 3.4%
Dallas	36%	37%	+ 2.8%
Harris	38%	39%	+ 2.6%
Travis	41%	40%	- 2.4%

Listed on the following pages are the attrition rates for each of the State's 254 counties. The longitudinal attrition rates for 1986-1987 are followed by total county rates for the 1985-1986 cohort.

CTY. NO.	COUNTY NAME	1986-1987 ATTRITION RATES BLACK	WHITE	HISPANIC	TOTAL	1985-1986 TOTAL
1	ANDERSON	16	27	47	26	23
2	ANDREWS	*	16	48	26	35
3	ANGELINA	28	29	70	31	25
4	ARANSAS	*	32	54	40	43
5	ARCHER	*	12	*	12	20
6	ARMSTRONG	*	14	*	12	47
7	ATASCOSA	*	26	38	33	33
8	AUSTIN	25	16	61	22	24
9	BAILEY	*	11	40	22	15
10	BANDERA	*	35	38	35	25
11	BASTROP	33	37	59	41	40
12	BAYLOR	*	10	*	13	25
13	BEE	*	31	37	34	32
14	BELL	25	24	35	26	25
15	BEXAR	41	24	49	39	37
16	BLANCO	*	8	*	9	*
17	BORDEN	*	*	*	21	25
18	BOSQUE	*	18	*	19	28
19	BOWIE	19	21	*	20	13
20	BRAZORIA	34	33	49	36	35
21	BRAZOS	37	24	50	30	27
22	BREWSTER	*	30	6	18	28
23	BRISCOE	*	*	*	39	16
24	BROOKS	*	*	27	25	22
25	BROWN	30	29	58	33	28
26	BURLESON	24	27	44	29	31
27	BURNET	*	40	69	44	36
28	CALDWELL	21	40	35	35	28
29	CAHOUN	*	23	42	31	27
30	CALLAHAN	*	25	*	25	28
31	CAMERON	*	29	45	43	46
32	CAMP	*	23	*	17	27
33	CARSON	*	12	*	12	15
34	CASS	1	23	*	18	25
35	CASTRO	*	10	37	25	26
36	CHAMBERS	27	33	*	32	36
37	CHEROKEE	25	26	*	26	31
38	CHILDRESS	*	35	*	40	39
39	CLAY	*	26	*	25	12
40	COCHRAN	*	16	49	28	27
41	COKE	*	15	*	16	11
42	COLEMAN	*	35	39	34	35
43	COLLIN	28	22	48	23	25
44	COLLINGSWORTH	*	38	*	47	58
45	COLORADO	10	9	32	14	12
46	COMAL	*	19	34	22	24
47	COMANCHE	*	21	47	28	15
48	CONCHO	*	10	14	12	26
49	COOKE	17	19	*	19	27
50	CORYELL	22	15	55	19	23
51	COTTLE	*	24	*	23	6
52	CRANE	*	39	57	41	43
53	CROCKETT	*	6	35	25	36
54	CROSBY	*	6	40	27	18
55	CULBERSON	*	*	35	31	9
56	DALLAM	*	14	22	15	17
57	DALLAS	45	27	59	37	36
58	DAWSON	*	22	32	30	27
59	DEAF SMITH	*	11	34	23	24
60	DELTA	29	24	*	24	28
61	DENTON	20	26	54	27	29
62	DEWITT	14	16	44	24	15
63	DICKENS	*	18	*	18	16

CTY. NO.	COUNTY NAME	1986-1987 ATTRITION RATES BLACK	WHITE	HISPANIC	TOTAL	1985-1986 TOTAL
64	DIMMIT	*	37	15	17	22
65	DONLEY	*	26	*	28	20
66	DUVAL	*	50	22	24	17
67	EASTLAND	*	32	50	33	24
68	ECTOR	29	24	45	30	30
69	EDWARDS	*	19	29	23	27
70	ELLIS	24	34	50	35	36
71	EL PASO	40	30	43	40	38
72	ERATH	*	22	*	24	31
73	FALLS	12	24	33	20	20
74	FANNIN	*	25	*	21	15
75	FAYETTE	*	8	20	6	13
76	FISHER	*	24	33	25	31
77	FLOYD	*	7	46	27	30
78	FOARD	*	21	*	7	*
79	FORT BEND	34	23	37	30	40
80	FRANKLIN	*	32	*	34	37
81	FREESTONE	32	33	*	33	38
82	FRIO	*	10	31	28	23
83	GAINES	*	27	51	37	35
84	GALVESTION	33	25	42	29	30
85	GARZA	*	8	33	16	31
86	GILLESPIE	*	20	*	10	17
87	GLASSCOCK	*	18	*	19	7
88	GOLIAD	*	*	17	3	6
89	GONZALES	40	22	47	35	33
90	GRAY	26	27	36	27	40
91	GRAYSON	31	30	38	31	29
92	GREGG	37	23	57	26	30
93	GRIMES	36	29	41	32	42
94	GUADALUPE	18	25	55	36	30
95	HALE	37	12	54	36	34
96	HALL	*	22	51	30	25
97	HAMILTON	*	21	*	23	32
98	HANSFORD	*	16	39	20	16
99	HARDEMAN	*	20	*	21	33
100	HARDIN	13	31	*	29	27
101	HARRIS	48	29	56	39	38
102	HARRISON	21	31	*	28	26
103	HARTLEY	*	38	*	33	28
104	HASKELL	*	24	38	30	24
105	HAYS	26	27	43	34	30
106	HEMPHILL	*	23	*	29	39
107	HENDERSON	33	21	*	23	29
108	HIDALGO	*	21	42	41	40
109	HILL	10	26	49	25	30
110	HOCKLEY	*	21	30	23	22
111	HOOD	*	28	*	27	19
112	HOPKINS	39	33	*	34	39
113	HOUSTON	42	34	*	37	33
114	HOWARD	37	32	48	37	42
115	HUDSPETH	*	43	28	33	40
116	HUNT	43	34	41	35	28
117	HUTCHINSON	*	26	64	29	28
118	IRION	*	8	*	14	*
119	JACK	*	39	*	38	34
120	JACKSON	23	24	61	32	28
121	JASPER	28	26	*	27	30
122	JEFF DAVIS	*	*	*	43	17
123	JEFFERSON	21	13	22	17	17
124	JIM HOGG	*	*	28	25	33
125	JIM WELLS	*	20	29	27	27
126	JOHNSON	53	34	52	36	35
127	JONES	34	29	42	32	23

CTY. NO.	COUNTY NAME	1986-1987 ATTRITION RATES BLACK	WHITE	HISPANIC	TOTAL	1985-1986 TOTAL
128	KARNES	*	*	35	20	23
129	KAUFMAN	20	35	47	33	40
130	KENDALL	*	25	34	27	28
132	KENT	*	*	*	39	2
133	KERR	*	33	41	34	37
134	KIMBLE	*	38	46	40	41
135	KING	*	*	*	*	*
136	KINNEY	*	*	49	48	45
137	KLEBERG	*	24	37	33	26
138	KNOX	*	13	14	9	18
139	LAMAR	15	22	*	22	26
140	LAMB	0	6	39	22	28
141	LAMPASAS	*	19	29	24	32
142	LA SALLE	*	13	32	31	31
143	LAVACA	42	1	*	8	18
144	LEE	2	14	*	9	25
145	LEON	12	24	*	22	24
146	LIBERTY	34	38	*	38	38
147	LIMESTONE	20	32	*	30	31
148	LIPSCOMB	*	31	*	33	19
149	LIVE OAK	*	26	19	23	29
150	LLANO	*	37	*	37	44
152	LUBBOCK	25	16	39	24	25
153	LYNN	*	1	42	27	23
154	MADISON	31	23	*	27	32
155	MARION	*	42	*	21	25
156	MARTIN	*	17	27	21	26
157	MASON	*	*	*	*	11
158	MATAGORDA	*	30	39	28	28
159	MAVERICK	*	9	41	40	44
160	MCCULLOCH	*	32	49	36	28
161	MCLENNAN	28	23	46	27	24
162	MCMULLEN	*	*	*	*	*
163	MEDINA	*	13	36	26	30
164	MENARD	*	2	28	19	41
165	MIDLAND	33	20	54	30	29
166	MILAM	14	18	30	19	20
167	MILLS	*	35	*	40	39
168	MITCHELL	*	36	40	37	34
169	MONTAGUE	*	29	*	30	28
170	MONTGOMERY	50	35	63	37	38
171	MOORE	*	14	41	22	24
172	MORRIS	14	30	*	25	28
173	MOTLEY	*	*	*	40	13
174	NACOGDOCHES	18	31	*	28	31
175	NAVARRO	15	30	33	26	28
176	NEWTON	*	12	*	8	21
177	NOLAN	*	16	34	19	18
178	NUECES	22	21	35	30	26
179	OCHILTREE	*	27	*	30	28
180	OLDHAM	*	42	*	46	9
181	ORANGE	21	25	27	25	24
182	PALO PINTO	19	27	51	30	33
183	PANOLA	34	26	*	28	27
184	PARKER	*	37	41	36	33
185	PARMER	*	12	43	26	23
186	PECOS	*	15	30	24	35
187	POLK	21	38	*	36	36
188	POTTER	23	18	43	22	20
189	PRESIDIO	*	*	46	42	40
190	RAINS	*	36	*	35	40
191	RANDALL	*	23	36	23	30

CTY. NO.	COUNTY NAME	1986-1987 ATTRITION RATES BLACK	WHITE	HISPANIC	TOTAL	1985-1986 TOTAL
192	REAGAN	*	28	37	30	38
193	REAL	*	18	*	24	*
194	RED RIVER	22	30	*	27	27
195	REEVES	*	34	54	50	50
196	REFUGIO	*	*	24	8	1
197	ROBERTS	*	17	*	16	36
198	ROBERTSON	19	32	49	29	34
199	ROCKWALL	28	25	*	25	37
200	RUNNELS	*	13	37	20	30
201	RUSK	21	26	*	25	23
202	SABINE	12	24	*	21	33
203	SAN AUGUSTINE	14	25	*	21	22
204	SAN JACINTO	13	36	*	31	38
205	SAN PATRICIO	43	32	45	39	37
206	SAN SABA	*	20	27	22	29
207	SCHLEICHER	*	*	47	19	16
208	SCURRY	*	25	62	33	41
209	SHACKELFORD	*	45	*	50	48
210	SHELBY	9	28	*	23	30
211	SHERMAN	*	17	*	22	13
212	SMITH	29	27	57	29	24
213	SOMERVELL	*	34	*	35	37
214	STARR	*	40	48	48	47
215	STEPHENS	*	38	*	39	36
216	STERLING	*	*	*	25	20
217	STONEWALL	-	-	-	-	17
218	SUTTON	*	31	45	38	38
219	SWISHER	*	6	47	21	27
220	TARRANT	37	26	49	30	29
221	TAYLOR	18	24	47	28	28
222	TERRELL	*	*	0	10	2
223	TERRY	*	27	42	37	41
224	THROCKTON	*	19	*	25	23
225	TITUS	28	26	*	27	24
226	TOM GREEN	32	23	41	28	25
227	TRAVIS	54	29	55	40	41
228	TRINITY	28	31	*	30	29
229	TYLER	*	21	*	14	20
230	UPSHUR	*	23	*	20	20
231	UPTON	*	30	40	32	34
232	UVALDE	*	22	44	36	36
233	VAL VERDE	*	31	51	48	49
234	VAN ZANDT	41	34	*	36	32
235	VICTORIA	15	16	36	24	26
236	WALKER	34	18	*	25	30
237	WALLER	21	29	57	29	34
238	WARD	*	30	31	30	33
239	WASHINGTON	40	26	*	32	35
240	WEBB	*	41	45	45	48
241	WHARTION	11	11	37	19	24
242	WHEELER	*	12	*	10	12
243	WICHITA	24	26	35	26	24
244	WILBARGER	21	23	55	27	34
245	WILLACY	*	20	43	41	38
246	WILLIAMSON	29	28	36	29	29
247	WILSON	*	18	33	26	32
248	WINKLER	*	12	41	25	39
249	WISE	*	30	56	31	30
250	WOOD	22	20	*	20	27
251	YOAKUM	*	39	55	45	39
252	YOUNG	*	34	*	31	38
253	ZAPATA	*	*	33	34	35
254	ZAVALA	*	*	30	29	25
	STATE TOTAL	38	26	46	34	33

Partnerships with Parents and Your Community: How Adult and Community Education Can Help

by *Tina Whitney*
Tina Whitney is an Education Specialist II for the Division of Adult and Community Education at the Texas Education Agency.

"Partnership." That is the watchword in education these days, and like the call for partnerships in business, where mergers often equal increased achievement, higher productivity, and marked profit, so in school settings can they lead to many positives where young people are involved.

There are many kinds of partnerships in school settings these days, but perhaps no other partnership is as beneficial to school and community alike as the one formed when parents join with the schools for the benefit of their mutual children. Traditionally, the teacher is seen as the person who influences and molds her young charges as a result of spending the bigger part of the day with them. In truth, parents spend 92% of their time with their children, while contact with teachers takes only eight percent of the time! Doesn't it seem logical, then, that if we are to turn the course of educational history around and start impacting positively on our children's minds, that we will actively involve our parents in the learning process?

> ***"If we can overcome the territorial battles that sometimes exist between parents and educators, and quit assigning "bake-sale" roles, then we will be truly successful at educating our citizenry."***

For too long, parent involvement in schools has traditionally gone no further than fundraiser activities, audience participation in school functions, and contributions of goodies for school parties. These days, parents want their school involvement to go beyond the traditional roles. They want to be included in the policy-making, the decision-making, the really important issues.

Indeed, many school districts in the state are already involving their parents to some degree. The higher degree of involvement, the stronger the impact. Research shows that children's education and development are enhanced when education is perceived as a joint agreement between school, parents, and the community, with the children as the focal point.

According to research, the more of a "blur" between school and family distinctions, the more ideal the situation for a child's education is. Some researchers believe schools should become more family-like, and families should become more school-like.

In a recent Harris poll, educators with more than ten years of teaching experience saw the lack of support by parents as one of the major stumbling blocks to educational achievement in schools today. Surprisingly enough, students with better attitudes and more parental involvement ranked higher than better wages in what educators felt would help them perform their jobs more effectively.

In Texas, one way parental involvement comes about is through the adult and community education programs operating either through local districts, community colleges, or education service centers. Adult education has long provided educational training to adults who never completed formal education in the traditional school settings. Community education, on the other hand, addresses such things as child care, extended day care, dropout intervention, and other issues affecting the community as a whole, while at the same time providing educational and other community classes for all ages. Today, the merger of adult and community education in many communities means that one administrator provides the combined services of both entities to the community.

That is where parental involvement projects benefit. An adult/community education professional can coordinate school/parent/community partnerships aimed at improving academic conditions in the home

for all members of the family. In homes where limited English usage is a further detriment to academic achievement, parental involvement activities coordinated through adult education ESL classes meet the needs of otherwise language-isolated citizens.

There are 63 adult education cooperatives and 96 community education projects in the state at the present time, and the majority sponsor some type of parental involvement activity or class.

In the Blanco Independent School District, community education works with volunteer parents who last school year totaled over 1,000 hours of volunteer work. This rural community is proud of the fact that strong core groups of volunteers travel quite a way from out in the country to work alongside their children. Some of the parents serve as resource people, some work with UIL, others with reading, spelling, or number sense.

In McAllen, Parent-Student Community Evening Study offers, through three magnet schools, ESL, literacy training, and parenting sessions. Students and parents of students enrolled in Pre-K, full day kindergarten, migrant, and language development classes, as well as others recommended by teachers, are served. Children's activities are coordinated with their daily school curriculum. Nontraditional approaches are used to enrich instructional activities.

In Cypress-Fairbanks, "Helping Hands" — a school and community project — concentrates on adult literacy/parenting classes, teacher inservice in reading instruction, and motivational techniques. The goal of this project is to improve the quality of reading instruction for students and parents, build positive student self-perception, and include parents in the decision-making processes of the school. Transportation is provided by a "parent van" and child care services are provided.

In Weatherford, parenting classes aimed at the undereducated focus on parents of the hyperactive child, and the special education child. School counselors come in to work on study skills. This program also has an "opportunity" classroom funded through JTPA, working with junior/high school age students, pregnant students, and drug rehabilitation students. This "team" concept involves students, teachers, and community members.

In the Northeast Independent School District of San Antonio, a bilingual community specialist directs this project with the excellent cooperation of a middle school (Nimitz) principal who strongly espouses innovative strategies. There are "lights on at night," making the school available to parents for cultural activities, or computer activities with their children. Core citizens bring others to school for such activities as parenting skills classes, child development seminars, and even classes where educational jargon such as ARD, Resource, Special Education, and TEAMS, is explained. Job training skills training is provided for single parents and teen parents.

There are many other parental involvement projects throughout the State varying in size and commitment. Certainly, they are not exclusively found in districts where adult and/or community education exist. One thing we do know, and that is that when they are coordinated through these two, the degree of commitment and effectiveness is high.

In *The Evidence Begins to Grow*, a special report by the National Committee for Citizens in Education, the statement is made: "Parental involvement is not a 'quick fix'; it is absolutely fundamental to a healthy system of public education." The effects of parental involvement are great, among them: high grades and test scores; long-term academic achievement; positive attitudes and behavior; more successful programs; more effective schools.

If we can overcome the territorial battles that sometimes exist between parents and educators, and quit assigning "bake-sale" roles, then we will be truly successful at educating our citizenry. ◊

VALUED YOUTH PARTNERSHIP TUTORS ARE HONORED FOR HELPING OTHERS SUCCEED

Student tutors participating in the Valued Youth Partnership Program were honored with an end-of-year ceremony hosted by the Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) at Jiminez' Restaurant. The purposes of this event were to: (1) acknowledge students' day-to-day efforts to successfully fulfill their responsibilities as tutors; and (2) recognize the positive impact that the total group of about 200 student tutors from nine campuses in five school districts has on improving the educational opportunities of 600 Hispanic elementary school students in the San Antonio area.

Because the program has expanded to add campuses from several new districts, it was necessary to hold two ceremonies. At each event, a guest speaker provided a brief keynote address. On Tuesday, May 17th, Linda Tafolla, the Community Services Director for KMOL TV spoke to the students. Ms. Tafolla shared personal anecdotes of specific events in her life that contributed to her present success. Specifically, she spoke about how she narrowly escaped being an educational statistic having been a school dropout, teen mother and, soon after, a single parent at a very young age. Linda shared with students the steps she took to obtain an education and succeed in business. She explained how, in addition to her full-time job, she owns her own video/film business, TLC Productions, and how on the very next day she would embark on a trip to London, England, to produce a videotape for one of her clients.

Among her words of advice to students were: (1) believe in yourself, (2) continue learning, (3) seek the support of your family, (4) associate with persons having positive attitudes, and (5) continue to set new goals to achieve.

On Wednesday, May 18th, student tutors listened to Dr. Daniel Juarez, a medical doctor with a specialty in internal medicine. Dr. Juarez encouraged students to decide early in their school career on a profession or career choice. He emphasized the importance of knowing what courses to take in high school and the need to be prepared for college. Dr. Juarez noted the positive influence that two teachers had in helping him achieve. Not only did those teachers identify the potential in him, but they linked him to two very famous doctors who provided him with specific and sound advice. He explained how, through them, he learned about the skills he needed to develop. Dr. Juarez highlighted the privileges he now enjoys and how much he enjoys his work. He contrasted his position with other persons' who, because of a lack of skills, must endure long, hard hours of labor-intensive work, doing a job they may not like and having little input into how a task would be accomplished. He encouraged students to develop work-related skills and continue learning to maintain those skills.

After listening to the guest speakers, student tutors enjoyed dinner. Soft drinks were provided compliments of the Coca-Cola Bottling Company of the Southwest. Later in the program, students were awarded certificates of appreciation. Finally, their teachers spoke words of praise, detailing the growth experienced by these students during the year they served as tutors of younger children. Overall, teachers were impressed by the tutors' sense of responsibility to do a good job, their demonstration of caring and concern for their young charges and the change in attitude demonstrated toward school and learning. Without a doubt, there were many reasons to celebrate on that evening, and celebrate they did! ◊

Acceleration: The Rapidly Growing Crisis of Illiteracy in Our Modern Workplaces

Editor's Note: *The following article was compiled from a speech given by Dr. Dale McCullough at the IDRA-sponsored Adult Education Seminar, "Empowering the Family Through Education." He is currently a Youth Policy Development and Program Specialist at the Texas Department of Commerce.*

At no other time in history has there been such an acceleration of conditions and events. I sometimes sit and think about the time span of events that separate my father, who is 76, from my son, who is 21 years old. My father remembers the first cars to appear in his home town — a time of dirt roads, no electricity and in many places, no running water. The automated wonders that surround my son define a totally new world of accelerated particles, highly symbolic relationships, and economic requirements. It is easy to become quite anxious about what awaits us in the future when the stability of the past seems to have already been swept away.

I grew up in rural Nebraska in the 1950s. Patterns of the society I remember from then remain today only in fragments. I remember a simpler time. Relationships were clear. Challenges were immediate and directly at hand. It was the time of the family farm and small communities stretching out across the land. Folks prided themselves on their honest labor and hard-earned self-sufficiency. And of necessity, when hard times came, they knew how to cooperate.

Reward for hard work was a clear concept in my childhood. Everyone was expected to pull their own weight. The family was the primary economic unit and was required to pull together for any one of them to succeed. If someone dropped out of school to support the family, there were many ways to make a living — if not on the farm, then in any number of hand labor jobs. I grew up in a time when rural America was the foundation of American economy, and life proceeded in a stable routine.

By the time I left Nebraska in 1960, dramatic changes had altered the rural landscape. Family farms were disappearing. In their place came the invisible giants. Large corporations bought out families, clearing the land of homesteads and livestock. Then came the huge new mechanical wonders of agriculture and agribusiness. Thousands, and even millions of acres were cultivated in mass production of products to feed far away markets in a network beyond the conception of the ordinary farmer. And as so many were forced to move into the cities to find new jobs and start new lives; it somehow seemed that the long-standing relationship between the land and opportunity had vanished.

The technological urbanization of America has greatly affected the basic institutions of our society. In the past three decades, the family has been fragmented by the acceleration of economic forces. For those who are disadvantaged, these forces have moved to the point of destroying lives. Many children in our society lack the basic supports necessary to survival in this modern world. For some, it means that they have no supporting adult in their life. The urbanization and attendant mobility of our economy has placed heavy stress on the unity and well-being of the American family. Given the increase in our population and the scattering of communities and families, the high number of school dropouts in our society indicates a general breakdown in the fabric of lives. Dropouts today, unlike those who dropped out to work on the family farm or in a neighbor's grocery store 30 years ago, have almost nothing to fall back on.

"Given the increase in our population and the scattering of communities and families, the high number of school dropouts in our society indicates a general breakdown in the fabric of lives."

To be gainfully employed in today's modern workplace, a person is required to have at least a high school education or its equivalent. More and more jobs demand higher order analytic thinking. Practically all jobs demand the basic skills of reading, writing, and computation. Even lower level entry jobs require a measure of literacy. Cleaning crews must be able to read schedules and basic instructions. Fast food employees must interpret orders, read the cash register, and practice good time management. And all employees in any work setting must fill out forms and sign papers.

The basic problem is that literacy requirements in the workplace are rapidly increasing. Minimal skills are not enough. A young employee in today's workplace should expect to change jobs many times during his/her lifetime and must also be prepared to learn new skills on short notice in order to continue to be successful. We do not have the choice of going back to simpler times. The individual today must adapt to changes that heretofore no generation has had to encounter.

During the past 30 years, the U.S economy has shifted away from primary production activities towards numerous services and various applications of systems technology. This "post-industrial" phenomenon has thrusted the United States into competition for producing a more qualified literate workforce than other nations that are striving to gain a more prominent position in servicing a widening world economy. At no other time in U.S. history has our society faced this kind of challenge.

Andrew Hahn and Robert Lerman, in their recent book entitled *What Works in Youth Employment Policy? How to*

Help Young Workers from Poor Families, tell us that "one of the most serious social problems confronting U.S. society in the last half of the 1980s is the large and growing number of young people who have chronic difficulty finding and keeping jobs, even in good economic times. Too often, these youth never become intergrated into the economic mainstream, but instead become involved in crime and teenage pregnancies, suffer persistent unemployment, poverty and welfare dependency as adults, and have children who face the same bleak future. After 20 years of public policies directed at breaking the cycle, it is worse than ever."

Nervous employers across the nation are seeking new ways to improve the literacy of their workers, and thus increase productivity. Businesses and corporations are increasingly investing in worker education and training programs. According to the National Governors' Association's publication Labor Notes, New York-area businesses are forced to spend $1.5 billion annually to train employees in basic skills. In another report, it was estimated that nearly $70 billion was spent by businesses and industry in 1986 for training and re-training of high school dropouts and graduates in basic skills.

> ***"... the problem is being perpetuated with 13% of U.S. high school graduates failing to reach reading and writing competence beyond the sixth-grade level, plus 1.3 million non-English speaking arrivals each year."***

Andrew Hahn and Robert Lerman document that the most serious youth employment problems have been getting worse and are highly concentrated among disadvantaged youth, particularly Blacks and Hispanics. For example, in 1955, about 65% of both white and black young men held jobs; by 1979, before the deep recession of 1980-1982 made things much worse, the employment rate had risen to 70% for young white men but had declined to less than 50% for young black men. A similar situation prevailed for women.

The increasing rates of dropout from our public schools — 33% overall in Texas, 27% for whites, 36% for blacks, and 45% for Hispanics according to an analysis in 1986 by the Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) — does not make our prospects for the future very bright. This seems to indicate a serious breakdown in the ability of society to prepare disadvantaged youth to find, take and keep the jobs that the society can provide for them. Gainful employment requires education, which equates with basic skills in today's marketplace.

Rapid technological change is demanding that workers have the ability to learn new skills on short notice and be prepared to change jobs many times during their work careers. Many of our youth may never see the opportunity of even a single legitimate career.

According to recent studies, approximately 20% of adults are functionally illiterate and thus do not have the basic reading, writing, and computational skills needed to function in our society. The problem is particularly severe for adult minorities since approximately 44% of blacks and 56% of Hispanics are classified as either total, functional, or marginal non-readers. Moreover, according to the U.S. Department of Education, the problem is being perpetuated with 13% of U.S. high school graduates failing to reach reading and writing competence beyond the sixth-grade level, plus 1.3 million non-English speaking arrivals each year. The most important factor causing persistent, concentrated youth unemployment is lack of basic skills.

A recent national test revealed that 56% of black youth and 44% of Hispanic youth were functionally illiterate, compared to only 13% of youth overall. Apparently, our society has failed to adequately serve those outside the mainstream, and we are now faced with an economic disaster if we continue to fail in our efforts.

There is a strong link between success in education and employment and some basic social factors. For example, youth with friends and relatives who are employed and youth who attend church regularly do better in the job market, while families on welfare do less well, than do youth who are otherwise similar (as judged by measurable variables such as education). It is compelling to assume that youth from different family backgrounds have different knowledge of educational opportunities as well as knowledge of and access to the job market. There are no easy solutions!

Mass communications, advertising, computer technology, and international marketing have changed the rules of the game. We live in an age of high tech systems, rapid change, and forced mobility. We cannot find security in traditional ways of doing things. Economic factors have altered many of the familiar structures of our society. Our communities, neighborhoods, and even personal relationships have been greatly stressed by high paced agendas and economic imperatives.

As the economic forces of our society continue to exert pressure on our most basic institutions, including the primary family, it is imperative that we redefine our basic values and relationships in order to move toward a larger sense of community than we have had in the past and build common purposes to ensure our future mutual prosperity. Schools, communities, and families must find a way to move closer together in making common goals.

Our nation as a whole, including businesses, bureaucracies, churches, social organization, civic and charity organizations and schools must combine their energies to systematically meet these new challenges together.

Communications technology allows an almost instant contact among people, if they know how to use it. Freedom of information has always been crucial to our democratic purposes in this society. But there will no longer by any freedom of information if we do not use it or if we fail to educate ourselves as to its importance to our mutual survival. ◊

The Innovative Approaches Research Project: Employing Research Findings to Improve Instruction for Limited English Proficient Students

by *Charlene Rivera, Ed.D.* • IARP Project Director
Development Associates, Inc. • Management and Governmental Consultants

Editor's Note: *The problem of school dropouts has, in recent years, become a critical concern to policy makers at the Federal, state, and local levels. It is estimated that between 290,000 and 325,000 female youths and between 325,000 and 375,000 males drop out of school each year. In addition, there are about 2.1 million females and 2.3 million males between the ages of 16 and 24 who are not enrolled in high school and have not completed high school. Although there has been extensive research on the problem of school dropouts, much research has focused on the scope of the problem, rather than on potential solutions. From the many recent studies examining different strategies for serving dropout-prone youth, the following question was consistently presented: How can instruction of limited-English-proficient students be improved in America's schools? That is the central question for which a current research and demonstration project, the Innovative Approaches Research Project (IARP), is now seeking answers. The project, though, goes beyond seeking answers. After completion of four, two-year, in-school research and demonstration projects, IARP's second stage is to ensure that the research advances find practical applications in the nation's classrooms. This article describes how the IARP will be applying its findings.*

Schools throughout the United States are facing the growing challenge of providing effective instruction to the increasing numbers of students with a language other than English as their native tongue. In response to the special educational challenges posed by students from limited-English-proficient (LEP) backgrounds, the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs (OBEMLA) funded the Innovative Approaches Research Project (IARP) and selected Development Associates, Inc., a governmental management and consulting firm, to administer the project. Development Associates IARP Project Staff includes: Dr. Charlene Rivera, Project Director; Dr. Paul J. Hopstock, Acting Associate Director; and Richard Ottman, Contracts Administrator.

Through IARP, four research and demonstration projects are being implemented as part of a single research effort in the following topic areas: (1) dropout prevention, (2) literacy instruction, (3) math and science instruction, and (4) education of exceptional LEP students. The goals of the research and demonstration projects, which are firmly rooted both in the research literature and in the practicalities of implementing the intervention in classroom settings, are to determine effective approaches for instructing LEP students and to document the innovations that are found to be effective in order to make it possible for educators to replicate them in a variety of settings. Each project is based on a broad research base, including current findings on cognitive development and learning as well as findings on second language learning and on cultural factors that affect classroom learning.

> ***"The goals . . . are to determine effective approaches for instructing LEP students and to document the innovations that are found to be effective in order to make it possible for educators to replicate them in a variety of settings."***

From the hundreds of individuals that expressed interest in conducting research in the designated topic areas, three projects have been selected to implement their projects under the IARP. The fourth project, in the exceptional student category, will be announced at the end of the summer. Upon comple-

tion of the projects in July of 1990, a technical report in which the researchers describe the related research literature, the research design, and the findings of the project will be one major IARP product. The other major product, translating the research for practical application in the classroom, will be a handbook which can be used by educators to replicate each of the innovative models or their component parts.

Dropout Prevention

"Partners in Education: A Cross-Age Tutoring Model for LEP Students At Risk for Dropping Out" is the title of the dropout prevention research and demonstration project that is being implemented by the **Intercultural Development Research Association** (IDRA) of San Antonio, Texas. In order to increase students' motivation for continuing in school and to assist students in setting goals that make continued attendance in school meaningful to them, the project incorporates the following main objectives: increasing student positive affect regarding the self and school, enhancing student basic academic skill levels, decreasing student truancy and disciplinary referrals, and forming school-home-community partnerships to provide additional support to the students.

The model is comprised of six components: (1) Cross-age tutoring, in which students who are at risk of dropping out are employed as tutors for elementary school students; (2) Classes for the student tutors, in which the tutors are provided with guidance and background instruction related to their tutoring; (3) Field trips in which the students (tutors and their tutees) are exposed to economic and cultural opportunities in the broader community; (4) Student recognition through award events in which all tutors are given special recognition for fulfilling their responsibilities as tutors; (5) Role modeling, in which successful Hispanic adults will speak to students regarding their careers; and, (6) Parent involvement, in which parents will be informed about the program, encouraged to support their child's involvement, and be given guidance as to how they can provide more specific assistance that will support their child's efforts toward completing high school.

Both qualitative and quantitative data will be collected and analyzed to assess differences in dropout rates for the 100 Hispanic LEP students in grades six through eight participating in peer tutoring in comparison with students not involved in the project. The sites for the study are schools within two school districts (Harlandale ISD and South San Antonio ISD), with students selected from two middle schools in each district.

The Intercultural Development Research Association staff involved with this project consist of: Dr. María del Refugio Robledo, Project Director; Dr. Alicia Salinas Sosa, Project Associate; and Aurelio M. Montemayor. The Continuing Reviewer of the project is Dr. Aaron Pallas of the Department of Philosophy and Social Sciences at Columbia University's Teachers College.

Literacy Instruction

"Community Knowledge and Classroom Practice: Combing Resources for Literacy Instruction" is the title of the IARP research and demonstration project focused on literacy instruction. The University of Arizona's College of Education, together with the Bureau of Applied Research in Anthropology, is implementing this project.

The main objective of this project is the development of innovative approaches to literacy instruction that are culturally and linguistically compatible with the background of LEP students from specific minority groups. The development of the instructional approaches is based on three main interrelated project activities: (1) an ethnographic analysis of the transmission of knowledge and skills and of the nature of literacy activities within the home environment of the students; (2) implementation of an "after-school lab" where researchers and teachers will use the ethnographic information to experiment with literacy instruction; and (3) implementation of the effective literacy instructional methods identified through the lab school in a formal classroom setting.

Students are expected to show improvement in literacy skills and in academic performance as a result of participating in the project. The project will result in a handbook detailing activities for literacy instruction that present meaningful tasks to the students and which are relevant to the students' own background. In addition, the handbook will describe how the "after-school lab" might be used in other schools in order to further define effective activities for literacy instruction relevant to other groups of students.

The project's ethnographic analysis involves 30 fourth to sixth grade LEP students. The research is designed to identify ethnographic information with potential utility in developing approaches to literacy instruction that are culturally and linguistically compatible with the background and experience of LEP students from specific minority groups (primarily Mexican-American). In an after-school lab setting, researchers and teachers will test these approaches on 15-20 students. Counting the final implementation stage in year two, a total of 270 students, primarily Mexican-American, will participate in the project.

"... the IARP research effort offers a unique opportunity to examine commonalities in effective instruction for LEP students across the projects, while at the same time examining innovative approaches specific to each of the four topic areas."

The University of Arizona staff involved with this project are: Dr. Luis C. Moll of the College of Education as Principal Investigator, and, as Co-Principal Investigators, Dr. Carlos Velez-Ibanez and Dr. James Greenberg of the Bureau of Applied Research in Anthropology. The project's Continuing Reviewer is Dr. Margaret Steffensen of the Illinois State University's Department of English.

Math and Science Instruction

"Cheche Konnen: An Investigation-Based Approach to Teaching Scientific Inquiry to Limited-English-Proficient Students" is the title of the IARP's math and science instruction research project that BBN Laboratories, Inc., of Cambridge, Massachusetts, is implementing. The title, "Cheche Konnen," means "search in the world and you will find." It describes the investigation-based approach being implemented. The goal of the approach is to increase students' scientific knowledge and understanding through collaborative instructional activities that involve them in the kind of scientific inquiry processes that characterize the work of practicing scientists. In these activities the students define problems, generate test hypotheses, analyze and interpret data and present results. Through these investigations, students will come to understand the purposes, concepts and methods of scientific inquiry and how these are linked in actual practice.

The project has two main objectives: First, the project seeks to help LEP students to learn and understand scientific concepts, processes, methods and facts through: (a) activities in which they experience science as intrinsically interesting, and valuable, and in which problem-solving involves a coherent set of linked activities, and (b) activities in which students use the skills, concepts, and tools of scientific inquiry to solve realistic problems. The second main objective of the project is to enable bilingual educators to implement and adapt the investigation-based approach to their classrooms. The products of the project will be a set of investigation-based model activities, a teacher's handbook providing both specific information on implementation of the approach as well as important scientific background information for teachers, a training plan for helping teachers use the investigation-based approach, and videotape materials that will support implementation and replication of the approach.

As part of the research phase of the study, both qualitative and quantitative data are being collected and analyzed to document the effects of the innovation on students and teachers. The project's research and implementation sites are the bilingual programs in two public schools in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The student participants are middle school and high school LEP students. The study participants are primarily Haitian students.

The BBN Laboratories staff involved in this project are: Dr. Bertram C. Bruce and Dr. Beth M. Warren, the Co-Principal Investigators; and Dr. Ann S. Roseberry, Instructional Scientist. The project's Continuing Reviewer is Dr. Jose P. Mestre of the Department of Physics and Astronomy at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

In conclusion, the IARP research effort offers a unique opportunity to examine commonalities in effective instruction for LEP students across the projects, while at the same time examining innovative approaches specific to each of the four topic areas. In the next two years a major goal of the IARP is to make the findings of the four IARP research and demonstration projects visible to educators generally and, more specifically, to educators who are currently teaching/working with LEP students. Toward this end, the IARP researchers will have opportuni-

ties to interact with one another and to share research findings with other researchers and educators who are working in related topic areas at conferences and at two IARP Symposia to be held in June 1989 and June 1990. An important goal of these interactions will be not only to promote awareness of the ongoing IARP research projects, but to invite comments and contributions from others on the research while in progress and to establish vital linkages between the IARP and those researchers, educators, and policymakers with interest in the outcomes of the IARP. Inquiries about the IARP can be made to Dr. Charlene Rivera, Development Associates, 2924 Columbia Pike, Arlington, VA 22204-4399, telephone: (703) 979-0100.◊

Typology Sets the Stage for Dropout Prevention Action

Editor's Note: A strong research base exists detailing the factors that cause students to drop out of school. The research is strong enough that most educators are now calling for less research and more action based on the research. But an intermediate step is required here. Some answers to some basic questions are needed. How can the research be organized to provide a base for action? What prevention approaches are available that directly address the causative factors identified by the research? What specific prevention programs are available and, by the way, do they have evidence that they are effective? The following article is provided by John Hollifield, editor of the CREMS Report, a publication of the John Hopkins University Center for Research on Elementary and Middle Schools. It describes a four-category typology which can be applied to almost any dropout prevention action.

Johns Hopkins researchers James McPartland, Ed McDill, and Deirdre Royster, working with Teachers College researchers Gary Natriello and Aaron Pallas, have developed a four-category ***typology*** of high school dropout prevention programs.

The four categories of the typology are: (1) success in school, (2) positive relationships in school, (3) relevance of school, and (4) outside interferences.

In addition to defining classifications, they have identified potentially effective approaches to dropout prevention in each category, and examined the effectiveness of specific existing programs in each category.

The typology allows middle school and high school educators to examine and implement approaches and programs that directly address the reasons for student dropouts in their schools. It also has implications for elementary school educators, who will quickly recognize that many of the problems identified by the typology have their genesis in the elementary school years.

Success in School

The researchers note that "one of the most often noted reasons for the high dropout rate in American schools is the lack of an appropriate match between the academic program of the school and the skills and interests of students."

This mismatch takes three forms. First, unattainable standards — for some students the academic program is too difficult, even overwhelming. Second, unchallenging standards — for some students the academic program is not sufficiently challenging and engaging. Third, irrelevant curriculum — for some students the academic program is simply not a very important part of their lives. It is not significant in their thinking about their priorities.

Programmatic approaches exist that address these three barriers to student success in school. First, the academic standards of the school curriculum can be modified, through individualization of the curriculum and instructional strategies, through improved diagnosis and placement of students, through evaluating students' academic work based on effort and progress, through multiple-abilities curricula which allow student success in areas other than academic, and through setting higher standards that are demonstrably worth achieving.

Second, the abilities and skills of students can be strengthened so they become more able to meet the academic demands of the school. Programmatic approaches for doing this include special in-school services under such programs as Chapter 1, total alterations of the entire school program to provide additional resources throughout the program, and special programs that supplement the in-school program. Peer tutoring instructional processes can be implemented as part of all these comprehensive programmatic approaches.

Third, the school academic program can be made more salient to the lives of students through such programmatic approaches as the offering of multi-ethnic curricula, career education, and providing incentives for school performance that students value.

> ***"The four categories of the typology are: (1) success in school, (2) positive relationships in school, (3) relevance of school, and (4) outside interferences."***

The researchers note that many existing dropout prevention programs incorporate the above approaches. They examine the Summer Education and Training Program as a specific example that shows promising results based on a rigorous evaluation.

Positive Relationships in Schools

Students who have a weak attachment to school are likely to drift away, and eventually to drop out of school. Programmatic approaches to strengthening students' attachment to school include approaches that focus on relationships with the school culture as a whole.

The quality and quantity of contact that high school students have with their teachers and other school staff are typically inadequate to develop close social bonds. Approaches that can help students feel that someone at the school cares about what happens to them include creating a "mentor" relationship that links each student to one or more particular adults, reducing school size through such mechanisms as the "school-within-a-school," and team teaching.

Programmatic approaches to promote peer networks that foster attachment to school include a system of extracurricular activities, the use of cooperative learning processes in classrooms, and socializing new students into the life of the high school through pairing with older students.

Schools can also develop a "culture" that makes all students feel that the school has a personal interest in their well being and achievement. Such an ethos is central to the well-known effective schools model, and includes clear and consistent goals, and fair and consistent school rules that are applied consistently to all students.

The researchers note that the "alternative" school concept attempts to tie the above elements into an effective package for dropout prevention. They examine Middle College High School in Staten Island, New York, as a specific example of the alternative school concept. The school is divided into small "houses," offers small classes and extra guidance counselors, has an extensive array of extracurricular activities, and many other features. Evaluations find high attendance rates, low dropout rates, and a high rate of acceptance into postsecondary education. However, the school is very selective about what students it accepts.

Relevance of School

Significant numbers of students — especially in urban areas — theoretically drop out of school because they see no connection between staying in school and improving their jobs prospects. In short, their current school tenure seems irrelevant to their future accomplishments.

Programmatic approaches which address this phenomenon try to link school learning and attendance with success in the job market. They include vocational education programs, coop programs in which students work while they also attend school, partnerships with business, and promised future employment or education opportunities based on satisfactory school attendance and performance.

Two prominent examples of these programs are the Boston Compact and the I've Got a Dream Foundation.

The first promises employment upon satisfactory completion of high school; the other promises payment of tuition for a college education.

Examining the evaluations of these programs, however, the researchers find no encouraging results as yet. Evaluations of the Compact find achievement scores decreasing and dropout rates actually increasing — a finding explained by noting that the Compact may be affecting the least disadvantaged students somewhat but is leaving the most at-risk segment of the population unserved.

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"... one of the most often noted reasons for the high dropout rate in American schools is the lack of an appropriate match between the academic program of the school and the skills and interests of students."

Evaluations of the initial I've Got a Dream program show that less than 50% of the children selected into the program in sixth grade have graduated from high school on schedule and been admitted to college.

Outside Interferences

A host of personal, familial, and community problems contribute to high dropout rates, especially for disadvantaged students. These include teenage pregnancy, alcohol and drug abuse, family financial need, community disorganization, and so on.

These multiple, interrelated, and persistent problems are addressed through cooperative programmatic approaches by schools and community agencies. Usually, the school assumes minimum participation, primarily acting as a referral service — for example, teenage parents may be referred to an alternative school which provides on-site child care.

The researchers examined the New York City Dropout Prevention Program as a specific example of a program that seeks to deal with the outside interferences faced by disadvantaged students.

The program permits a number of high schools and their feeder middle schools to select among four models that entail varying degrees of school/community agency collaboration, from intermediate to intensive.

All models provide attendance outreach services and incentives, a guidance and counseling component, linkages between middle and high school, and alternative education programs.

Again, however, evaluations of the program, which begin in the 1984-1985 school year, show no encouraging results as yet, mostly because of problems of implementation and monitoring.

Evaluations Needed

Their typology, note the researchers, reveals the "enormous gaps in research knowledge about what alternative programs actually work to reduce the dropout rates." Their research could find few evaluation studies of dropout prevention approaches that met reasonable scientific standards, and even fewer that "used randomized designs in the evaluation."

Thus, although many dropout prevention programs are being implemented throughout many schools and districts, we are still left with little knowledge about what actually works to reduce dropout.

Typology of potentially effective approaches to dropout prevention programs may be the tool for action based on extensive student dropout research. ◊

One state's attempt to insure success at school for all students

TENNESSEE'S GOVERNMENT ATTACKS DROPOUT PROBLEM WITH 15-POINT INITIATIVE TO FOCUS ON AT-RISK STUDENTS

Editor's Note: *The following article is compiled from information released by the State of Tennessee's Governor's Office. It represents the action determined by the state to aggressively address the problem of student dropouts and hopefully decrease the high rate of illiteracy, unemployment, and welfare.*

Tennessee Governor Ned McWherter, himself a one-time high school dropout, recently unveiled a comprehensive 15-point state program to keep children in school so they can qualify for good jobs.

McWherter, who returned to school to graduate and eventually become Tennessee's chief executive, said the new program is crucial to maintaining Tennessee's economic development momentum. He announced the new program along with Tennessee Education Commissioner Charles Smith.

"We have three goals for this program. First, we want to help students stay in school. Second, we want to help parents create an environment for learning. Finally, we want to give teachers the support they need to educate every student in every Tennessee classroom," the governor said.

Currently, slightly more than $10 million is earmarked in the state's education budget for dropout-related programs. With the approval of the Tennessee General Assembly, they said the figure may exceed $25 million by July 1, 1989.

The program, "Insuring School Success For At-Risk Students," when presented to the Tennessee legislature's Education Oversight Committee, will include the following 15-point initiative to attack Tennessee's Dropout Problem:

- **Pilot Multi-Purpose Learning Center in Urban Housing Project**
  Among residential environments, urban housing projects tend to have the highest concentrations of at-risk students. For this reason, the Tennessee governor's office believes a concerted effort must be made to bolster these students' classroom experience by establishing home-based learning opportunities. As a first step, $36,000 in state funding has been allocated to start a pilot learning center in the Preston Taylor housing project in Nashville. Using a one-room drop-in school concept, the center will offer three types of services to residents of the project: (1) homework and counseling assistance to students, (2) parenting skills training for families of students, and (3) literacy classes for adults. The center, administered by the Metro-Nashville public schools, will be staffed by a certified teacher and an aide and will be open from 4 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. each school night.

- **Smaller Classes for Primary Grade Students in High Risk Communities**
  Preliminary results of the state's experimental STAR project have shown conclusive evidence that slow learners in the primary grades benefit significantly from smaller pupil-teacher ratios. Similar evidence has been forthcoming from other research projects across the nation.

- **Increased Awareness of Career Opportunities for At-Risk Pupils**
  Research has shown clearly that students typically mentally drop out of school before actually leaving school. The primary reason cited is that these students — generally at some point in the middle school or junior high experience — become bored and fail to recognize the value of a high school degree or the consequences of failing to finish school. Curriculum frameworks are currently being developed and field tested by the state Department of Education, with full implementation slated for the beginning of the 1989-1990 school year.

- **At-Risk Component in School Child Care Programs**
  The 96th General Assembly enacted legisla-

tion paving the way for local schools across the state to be used before and after the traditional school day for a variety of study and learning activities. Through staff development programs, in-service training, and technical assistance, the state Department of Education will promote at-risk student components in school child care programs.

- **Expanded Alternative School and In-School Suspension Programs**
  At present, 115 of the 132 school systems which have high schools participate in the state's alternative school and in-school suspension programs for disruptive students. Plans include a request to the General Assembly to expand state funding to enable the remaining schools to become a part of the program. Since most of the students in the alternative school and in-school suspension programs are not only at risk of eventually dropping out but also a disruptive influence on the academic performance of classmates, the expanded program will have greater positive impact on the overall state effort to reduce the dropout rate.

- **Peer Study Partners for Students At Risk**
  In recent months, the governor's administration has used the services of the popular Tennessee Tomorrow student organization to pilot test a peer tutoring program in 25 high schools across the state. Based on the success of the pilot effort, the state Department of Education has located $100,000 in state funding to establish a Governor's Study Partners Corps in 85 Tennessee public high schools during the current year. Each school corps will be made up of junior and senior level students who accept responsibility to tutor other students in their classes on a regular and organized basis. In some of the programs, the corps members will target elementary school students for tutoring assistance.

- **Statewide Availability of Jobs for Tennessee Graduates Program**
  For the past few years, a few Tennessee high schools have been affiliated with a national program which provides at-risk students with valuable school-to-work transition assistance during their junior and senior years. Access to the program has been limited because of a lack of coordination and sense of direction on a statewide basis. To expand opportunity for participation in the program, $1 million in funding has been earmarked for the Jobs for Tennessee Graduates, administration of the program has been transferred from the Department of Labor to the Department of Education, and preparations have been made to establish a state Advisory Board to oversee the development of the program statewide.

- **Improved Parenting Skills for Families of Pre-School Children**
  The Tennessee governor has earmarked $250,000 in state funding for competitive grants to school districts to develop model programs for improving parenting skills in families of pre-school children. Establishment of the model program underscores the administration's recognition of the importance of parenting in the preparation of youngsters for the school experience. School systems will compete for grants up to $10,000 based on proposals submitted to the state Department of Education.

- **Competitive Grant for Rural Pilot Program to Keep Pregnant Students in School**
  In several urban high schools in Tennessee, programs have been developed to assist pregnant teenagers and teenage parents in efforts to earn their diplomas and to learn parenting skills. Such programs have proved successful in keeping more students in school at a time when across the state 80% of the pregnant teenagers fail to complete high school. Unfortunately, rural education systems have generally had difficulty gaining community support for programs for pregnant teenagers and teenage parents. In an effort to test the value of such a program in a rural setting, the state Department of Education has set aside $40,000 in its current year budget to award on a competitive basis a grant to a local school system for the establishment of a pilot program.

- **Earlier Identification of and Intervention for Students At Risk**
  The state's mandated testing program has been revised to provide consistent grade-to-grade tests. As a result, for the first time in Tennessee's history, local school teachers, and principals will be able to make sound judgments and

conclusions concerning the various levels of achievement for each student in each class, in each grade, in each school in the areas of math, reading, language arts, science and the social sciences. The new Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program will provide each school system with in-depth test scores, along with interpretative data which will enable school officials to identify easily the students who show signs of being at risk.

- **More Elementary Guidance Counselors**
  It is believed by the state's administration that elementary guidance counselors play a particularly vital role in any effort to identify early the potential school dropouts and to shape individual and collective strategies for early intervention. That belief has been expressed tangibly by the pumping of nearly $2 million additional state dollars into new counselor positions across the state in the past 18 months. An additional $1 million will be committed by the beginning of the next school year. The result is that the number of state funded guidance counselors will have increased by about 50% by the end of the current school year.

- **Greater Use of Extended Contract Dollars for At-Risk Programs**
  Effective during the 1989-1990 school year, the state's Extended Contract program for teachers and administrators will require that each school system conduct a needs assessment and develop a plan for use of Extended Contract funding to meet identified needs. At present, the Extended Contract program is funded at a level of about $20 million. Based on the extent of the dropout problem in Tennessee, it is projected conservatively that a minimum of half of those dollars will be targeted for programs to assist at-risk students.

- **Creation of Dropout Prevention Office at State Level**
  The comprehensiveness of the governor's effort to keep at-risk students in school will require day-to-day leadership and direction. Accordingly, the recent reorganization of the state Department of Education and elimination of 88 positions took into account the need to establish a Dropout Prevention Office with a full-time director. That has already been done.

- **At-Risk Student Focused In-Service Training for Teachers**
  A key factor missing in the state's initial mandated student testing program was an understanding of how to use the test data in improving student performance. The new program that will go into effect next year will place heavy emphasis on providing technical assistance to teachers and principals. Post-test workshops will be scheduled in each region of the state for testing coordinators. Each system will be given a video explaining the interpretation process, along with suggestions as to how the data can be used to help with decisions concerning curriculum, teaching guidelines, and priority areas of certain subtests. In addition, the focus of $400,000 in existing in-service and staff development programming conducted by the state Department of Education has been shifted to subject areas related to the needs of at-risk students.

- **More Exact Definition of School Dropout**
  Tennessee, like most other states, has had no systematic method for calculating student dropouts. In essence, the dropout count has been based on enrollment comparisons which simply subtract the number of students in the 12th grade from the number of ninth graders enrolled four years earlier. Such a process does not take into account students who died or transferred to other schools outside the system. By using a new computer attendance accounting system, the state Department of Education now has the capacity to track students more effectively. As a result, the Department has adopted a simplified definition of a dropout as "a student who (for any reason other than death) leaves school before graduation without transferring to another school or institution." The new computer tracking system will be pilot-tested this school year in 16 Tennessee school systems, with full implementation projected in all 140 districts next year.

Commissioner Smith said the plan places heavy emphasis on early identification of students who may be at risk of dropping out of school. By identifying these students early, the commissioner said educators can intervene more effectively to prevent them from dropping out of school.

"Too often in the past, educators have tried to focus dropout prevention efforts at the high school level. Unfortunately, that is too late for most at-risk students.

"Research clearly shows that potential dropouts can be identified as early as the pre-school years and certainly during primary grades. For that reason, we are targeting several of our initiatives on pre-school and primary grade children and their parents," Smith said.

Results of the state's experimental STAR project — and similar research across the nation — has shown conclusively that slow learners in primary grades benefit significantly from smaller pupil-teacher ratios.

As an inducement to local schools, McWherter said he will propose that the General Assembly provide financial incentives to school systems with high concentrations of at-risk students for decreasing class size in the primary grades.

To provide even more help to at-risk students, the governor said $100,000 is being allocated in this year's education budget to establish a Governor's Study Partners Corps in 85 high schools.

McWherter said the effort will be patterned after the successful peer tutoring program pioneered last year by high school students in the Tennessee Tomorrow program and will include the 25 high schools served by that program.

He said the new Governor's Study Partners Corps will be comprised of high school juniors & seniors who agree to tutor other students on a regular basis. While most tutoring will be done in the high schools, some programs may target students in elementary grades for help.

George Caudill, experienced educator, will direct the state's dropout prevention program. ◊

AT&T Grant Awarded to IDRA for Helping At-Risk Students

SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS —
The second phase of a $240,000 grant from the AT&T Foundation has been awarded to the Intercultural Development Research Association of San Antonio for two pilot programs to help high-risk students stay in school.

Known as "Parent Teacher Centers for Valued Youth," the AT&T project focuses on support services for students, including teachers as mentors/tutors and parent training for middle school students (grades 7-8) at two Texas schools: L.V. Stockard Middle School in Dallas and John Marshall Middle School in Houston. IDRA, headquartered in San Antonio, is administering the program and providing training and technical assistance.

"Our initial effort under the project began almost a year ago," said Aurelio Montemayor, director of IDRA's Center for Prevention and Recovery of Dropouts. "Funds are being used to hire teachers to work after regular school hours as tutors for targeted children and also to work with their parents."

"In Dallas, our focus has been on the tutoring program, while in Houston we've been more involved with parents through the Communities In Schools program. The groups are small enough (36 students in Dallas and a cluster group of 30 parents in Houston) that we've been able to see immediate impact," Montemayor said.

The Dallas and Houston schools were targeted because they are within the largest school districts in Texas. IDRA worked with the local school districts to determine which schools would benefit most from the program.

John C. Guerra, Jr., AT&T division manager of selling operations in San Antonio and a member of the AT&T Foundation Board of Trustees, said the IDRA project was selected because of its potential to develop new approaches to solving the Hispanic dropout problem.

AT&T recognizes the need for an educated workforce, and we believe the middle school years are the most important in determining which students will stay in school and which will drop out. While the dropout problem crosses all socio-economic lines, the fact is that Hispanic children—with a potential dropout rate of 50% in Texas and nationwide—are in the highest risk category.

"With the large Hispanic community in Texas, we felt our funds for research would be best spent here," Guerra said. ◊

TEXAS DROPOUTS REVISITED: 1989

by

José A. Cárdenas, Ed.D.

In October, 1986, IDRA stirred up a hornets nest of controversy with the release of the *Texas School Dropout Project*, a study conducted by IDRA under contract with the Texas Department of Community Affairs and the Texas Education Agency.

Basic to the controversy was the key finding that 33% of Texas students were dropping out of school during the high school years, with dropout percentages much higher for minority groups, and an unbelievably high rate of 45% for Hispanics.

Most educators in the State accepted our findings with alarm and concern. A segment of the education community, however, reacted with an attempt to kill the messenger for bringing to the State foreground a problem they considered better kept in the closet. Another segment of the education community denied the existence of the problem and credited the embarrassing evidence to invalid data, poor research methodology, and bad faith on the part of the research organization.

The next few months, following publication of the magnitude study on Texas dropouts, were gloomy days at IDRA, with school officials publicly calling for the chastisement of IDRA "for twisting of statistics, which has done a disservice to the State." Some school officials were kinder, blaming the "erroneous" findings on the absence of adequate data bases in the State.

At worst, IDRA was accused of fabricating erroneous, negative data in order to acquire funds for solving a non-existing problem.

Much of the criticism focused on the methodology used in the study. IDRA initiated four separate studies on the magnitude of school dropouts in Texas: district self-reports, analysis of census data, review of prior estimates, and calculation of attrition rates.

The analysis of school district data had to be abandoned. School districts did not use a standard definition of a dropout, leading to a lack of comparability among data submitted to the State by school districts. Sixty-two percent of the districts reported having no standard formula for calculating dropouts. Some districts used enrollment figures in calculating dropout percentages; other districts used attendance figures. An unbelievable 96.5% of the districts stated that no dropout study had ever been conducted in their districts.

The analysis of census data and the review of estimates by other entities validated the high dropout rates produced by the attrition formula.

In retrospect, much of the controversy on dropout rates was caused by confusion over annual and longitudinal rates. Districts report dropouts in annual figures, the number and percentage of students who drop out in a given year. IDRA calculated a longitudinal rate, the cumulative percentage of dropouts in a group of students proceeding through various grade levels over a period of years, in this case from ninth to twelfth grade.

An annual dropout rate of five percent in any school district seems like a small amount. However, this reported rate indicates that an average of five percent of the students in the district dropped out during a specific year, with an average of five percent of all seventh graders dropping out, five percent of eighth graders, five percent of ninth graders, etc. If the five percent annual dropout rate holds static over a number of years, the cumulative longitudinal rate for a cohort is five percent for the first year, ***plus*** five percent the next year, plus five percent the next year. Over a period of six years, from seventh to twelfth grades, 30% of the original group will be lost, not an insignificant nor a small amount.

The annual dropout rates reported by school districts were further diminished by reporting requirements encompassing grades kindergarten to 12th. Since very few students have been found to drop out at the kindergarten level, or early elementary school grades for that matter, calculating the annual dropout rate over a 13-grade range produced extremely low rates, such as three percent. Yet, over this 13-year period, 39% of the original students enrolled have dropped out of school.

In its January 1987 *Long-Range Plan of the State Board of Education for Texas Public School Education*, the Board specified an immediate goal ex-

pressed as a longitudinal rate of 24% for grades nine to twelve, and a long-range goal of five percent longitudinal rate by 1997-1998. This longitudinal rate converts to an annual high school rate of 1.25%, almost one-fifth of the existing annual rate.

Unfortunately, many school officials have failed to understand the difference between an annual and a longitudinal dropout rate, and they erroneously believe that existing annual rates are below the State goal, whereas the conversion of the districts' annual rates produces longitudinal rates 6 to 13 times greater than the State goal.

If the IDRA study, which was mandated by the Texas Legislature, accomplished nothing else, it was of value in identifying the lack of interest, attention and concern being given school dropouts.

The IDRA study led to a strong statewide effort to address school dropouts as a pressing educational problem. The Texas Education Agency developed a standard and better definition of a dropouts for the 1987-1988 school year based on school district reports. Though not all districts submitted reports, and a uniform reporting system is far from a reality, the figures appear much more realistic.

IDRA views these new figures with mixed emotions. The TEA figures more than validate our 1986 report and subsequent studies for following years. We feel vindicated. The high figures we produced were not figments of our imagination, were not based on a flawed methodology, were not exaggerated or distorted, but rather were a valid finding of a large and deplorable educational problem in the State of Texas.

On the other hand, we feel depressed at the existence of this problem, the failure of the educational system to cope with it, and the appearance that the problem is growing, rather than diminishing.

In 1988 we reported that in the two years following the full implementation of House Bill 72, the reform legislation enacted in 1984, the rate of school dropouts increased by ten percent the first year and six percent the second year.

TEA now reports an annual dropout rate for the 1987-88 school year averaging 6.07% in grades seven to twelve. Multiplying by the six years reported in the study, this figure converts to a longitudinal rate of 36.42%, higher than our 33% rate, which shocked the State in 1986.

TEA data, broken down by race/ethnicity, is even more depressing, with longitudinal rates of 28% for white, non-Hispanic; 42% for black; 50% for Hispanic; 30% for Asian; and 47% for Native American.

Table 1 provides the number of school dropouts reported by districts to the Texas Education Agency for the 1987-88 school year by race/ethnic group. Enrollments and dropouts are converted into annual percentage rates and subsequently converted to a 6-year longitudinal rate by multiplying the annual rate by six. An assumption is made that the annual rate will hold constant for a 6-year period. IDRA rates de-

TABLE 1
Texas Dropout Data
Based on District Self-Reports, 1987-88
Grades 7 - 12

	TEA Data				IDRA Data		
Race/ Ethnicity	Enrollment	No. of Dropouts	Annual Percent	6-Yr. Long.	IDRA 88	IDRA 87	IDRA 86
White	744,850	34,809	4.67	28	24	26	27
Black	194,811	13,614	6.99	42	39	38	34
Hispanic	396,983	33,005	8.31	50	49	46	45
Asian American	25,949	1,281	4.94	30	28	30	33
Native American	2,223	174	7.83	47	37	39	45
TOTAL	1,364,816	82,883	6.07	36	33	34	33

rived by an attrition formula are also provided for a 3-year period.

Figure 1 provides a graphic comparison of TEA rates for 1987-1988 and IDRA rates for 1987-1988, 1986-1987 and 1985-1986. TEA data converted to longitudinal rates are higher than the three annual IDRA attrition estimates.

FIGURE 1
Comparison of Texas Dropout Rates: IDRA/TEA Reports

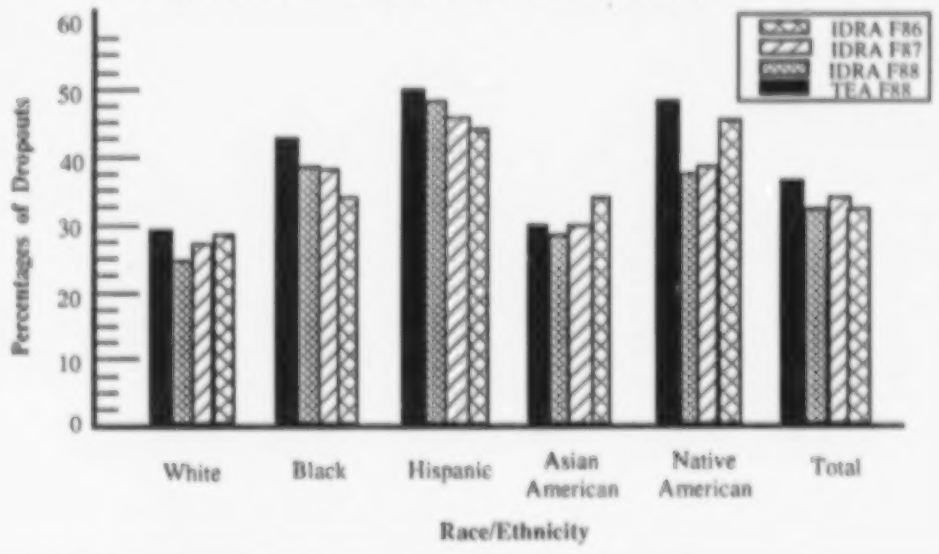


Figure 1 also shows a slight decrease in attrition rates for whites (non-Hispanic), Asian Americans and Native Americans, and proportionate increases for blacks and Hispanics.

Table 2 provides dropout and annual percentage rate information grouped by grade level, from the TEA study for all students.

Figure 2 provides a graphic distribution of TEA dropout rates by grade level.

Regardless of the data source, it is clearly evident that the dropout situation is a severe problem in Texas schools, and that the problem is not getting any better; if anything, it appears to be getting worse, at least for the largest minority groups in the State.

IDRA has consistently held that the identification of the problem and the determination of its magnitude is only the first step, though a very necessary first step, to its eventual solution.

Determination of the magnitude is essential in order to determine subsequently the results of State and district efforts to address the problem.

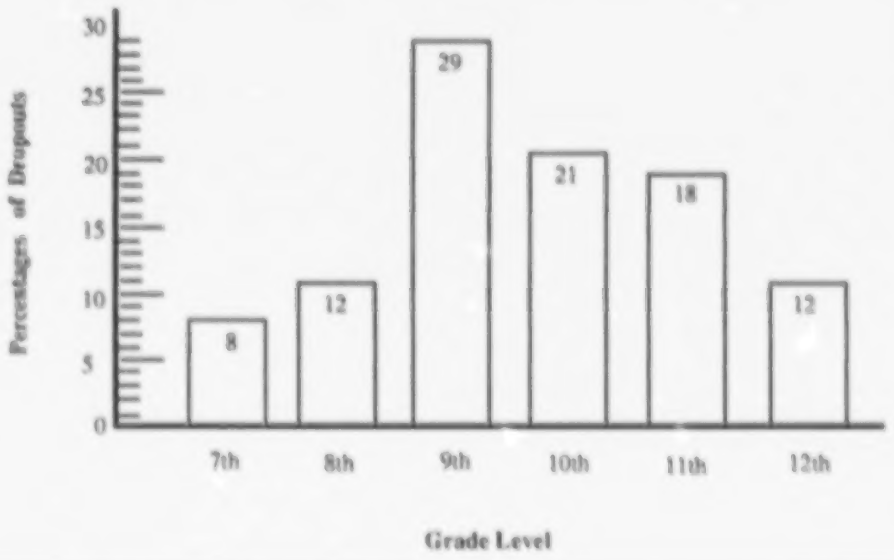
The existence of a large, serious and pervasive problem makes it now incumbent upon the State of Texas to target massive resources for its solution. We trust that the educational system, the State Legislature, the economic sector and each community in the State will provide the necessary leadership, financial and personnel resources, and improved educational programs to meet the challenge of a large and growing educational problem. ◊

TABLE 2
Texas Dropouts: Grade Distribution
Based on District Self-Reports, 1987-88

Grade	Dropouts	Enrollees	Annual Percent	6-Yr. Long.	% of Total
7	6,832	244,387	2.80	2.80	8.24
8	9,961	234,498	4.25	4.25	12.02
9	24,186	264,328	9.15	9.15	29.18
10	17,340	228,118	7.60	7.60	20.92
11	14,838	210,751	7.04	7.04	17.90
12	9,726	182,734	5.32	5.32	11.73
TOTAL	82,883	1,364,816	6.07	36.16	100.00

FIGURE 2

Dropouts: Grade Distribution, TEA Data 87-88



Parental Involvement: A "Valued" Component for Children to Succeed in School

by *Frances M.Guzmán, M.Ed., Aurelio Montemayor, M.Ed. and Cindy S. Raisor*

Parental involvement in school has been described as one of the vaguest and most misunderstood educational issues facing us today (Asher, 1987). While many parents and school staff are concerned about the quality and extent of parental involvement in education, there are still many who are confused about what it means and who should be responsible for getting parents involved.

For some, parental involvement means parents engaging in activities with their children or school staff, activities that may include helping the child at home with homework, volunteering for school activities needing parental supervision, or attending workshops or parent-teacher conferences to improve educational opportunities for children. For the most part, educators and parents of middle class students agree on what parental involvement means: how parents participate actively in all facets of their children's education. Yet not all parents participate, and many disagree about who is to blame. Educators of minority children or children from low-income homes insist that parents are apathetic or do not want to get involved, while the parents contend that schools do not welcome their help, nor do they provide the quality of education that children from middle class families receive.

> ***"'To ensure the quality of schools as institutions serving the community, parents must be involved at all levels of the school.'"***

Of significance to all is the role of the family in educating our children, especially minority students. Listed below are positive assumptions about the role of the family in the process of education.

1. The family provides the primary educational environment.
2. Involving parents in their children's formal education improves student achievement.
3. Parent involvement is most effective when it is comprehensive, long-lasting, and well planned.
4. The benefits are not confined to early childhood or the elementary level; there are strong effects from involving parents continuously throughout high school.
5. Involving parents in their own children's education at home is not enough. To ensure the quality of schools as institutions serving the community, parents must be involved at all levels of the school.
6. Children from low-income and minority families have the most to learn when schools involve parents. Parents do not have to be well-educated to help.
7. We cannot look at the school and the home in isolation from one another; we must see how they interconnect with each other and with the world at large (Henderson, 1987).

Because IDRA is an advocacy organization committed to improving educational opportunities for all children, especially minority students, its projects recognize and value what minority parents can contribute to education and schooling: each component (student, school, family/community) is interdependent in improving the educational environment. The diagram above illustrates this 3-sided partnership in education.

Several IDRA projects integrate these three components in their training activities in which parents and community are joined with school and students in order to create a richer, more comprehensive environment for learning. Some of these projects include the Bilingual Pre-School Project, the Family English Literacy Project, the Parent-Teacher Centers for Valued Youth, the Hispanic Mobilization for Dropout Prevention, and the Partners for Valued Youth.

If we are to make significant changes in the undereducation of our youth, in ineffective schooling practices as they relate to minority and low-income students, in low student performance, and in the high and unacceptable dropout rates, then the partnerships among parents/community, school, and students must be cultivated. The goals of IDRA and the projects developed from the staff include an educational partnership in which all three work together to improve the quality of education for all students.

Another Solution: "The Valued Parent Model"

A look at effective schooling practices shows that positive expectations of parents is a prerequisite for a successful educational environment. The "valued parent model" rests on the idea that the family, any family, should be respected for what it is—not compared to an ideal model, not criticized for its deficiencies, nor blamed for failures; it should be regarded with equality, dignity, understanding, and compassion.

The family should be regarded with **equality** because all families (regardless of income level, first language, or cultural preferences) are equally important to the education of our youth. Our nation depends on a unified citizenry, one concerned about working together toward improving the quality of education for all—not one divided and leading to unequal, and eventually unsuccessful, educational opportunities. Only through a belief in equality can we support an educational environment that will work.

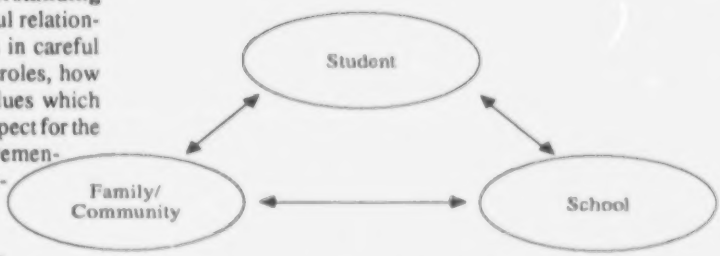
The family should be regarded with **dignity** because the family as a unit is capable of achieving the impossible. The cultural or linguistic qualities which distinguish one family from another, which differentiate one family from the norm, contribute to its strength and integrity.

The family should be regarded with **understanding** and **compassion** because the key to a successful relationship with a family or any of its members lies in careful observation and comprehension of individual roles, how they work together, and the traditions and values which shape the family unit. An understanding and respect for the family elicits a compassion for those who face tremendous odds—economic distress, prejudice, culture shock, language barriers. . . .

Respecting the family, then, understanding its ability to survive, to effect change for the good of its members, we should not find it difficult to believe that—

- Parents **want** their children to be educated;
- Parents will respond positively to a school's communication—if they can understand the language spoken, if the message is sincere, and if the speaker respects the culture of the home;
- Parents will get involved when they realize they can make a difference, when they know their concerns will be heard;
- Parents will support schools and become active partners with teachers and the community;
- Parents are potential leaders and each has something to contribute.

The Interrelated and Interdependent Roles of Student, School, and Family and Community



Programmatic Implications

Schools that value the potential contributions of all parents should seek the following goals:

- To develop a positive attitude toward parental involvement: Schools should respect all parent/school interactions; schools should foster a willingness among school staff and parents to work with one another; parent interaction and involvement should be seen as positive steps toward improving school/parent/student relations.
- To give parents a variety of ways for communicating or interacting with schools: Parents should have different opportunities for interacting with staff and one another and for contributing their ideas (i.e., off-hour use of school facilities, a bilingual or parent hotline, etc.).
- To respect linguistic and cultural differences: Schools should not only recognize these differences but also encourage parents to teach in the language and environment most familiar to the child, creating a bond between parent and child during an enjoyable learning experience. Teachers who respect what the child brings to the classroom will also create a positive, reassuring learning environment.
- To contact and interact with parents regularly: Schools should contact parents, by letter, phone call, and even home visits on a regular basis. Schools should assign particular staff to be responsible for improving parent/school relations and involvement.
- To communicate extensively to parents news about school, classroom, and community involvement in education.
- To train parents for important roles: Schools should develop programs to show parents how to teach, counsel, and make decisions so that they become one of their children's most effective educators and leaders.
- To create educational activities outside the school setting: Schools should show parents how to use resources outside the home and school that will reinforce the skills taught in the more formal setting.
- To make meeting times and places accessible to all: Schools should arrange meeting places and times that are convenient to everyone.
- To develop activities for parents and children that can be done at home as well as school: Schools should show parents how to reinforce what the child learns at school through home-based instruction, activities, and resources.
- To provide year-round opportunities for parents and teachers to interact with and learn from one another: Schools should provide in-house training and extracurricular activities to foster parent/teacher relations and continued learning experiences all year.

When schools value parents—when schools respect what parents can contribute, when schools assume and expect only the positive from parents, when schools find ways to foster parent/school interaction and activities, when schools show parents how to become teachers—then schools invite answers. Parental involvement is the source from which schools will find solutions that work. ◊

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Editor's Note: *As this article discusses the issues and IDRA's beliefs concerning parental involvement, the following articles describe how these beliefs work within some of the various IDRA programs.*

Parents Working for Our Valued Youth

by *Merci Ramos, M.A.*

Limited English proficient (LEP) students who are at risk of dropping out of school are the target of IDRA's dropout prevention research and development project, "Partners for Valued Youth: A Cross-Age Tutoring Model." Although the project is designed to increase students' motivation for continuing in school and to assist students in setting goals that make continued attendance meaningful to them, parents are also an important part of the project. Parents of tutors are encouraged to participate in each of the parental activities that will help in the attainment of the following objectives: increasing student positive attitudes regarding self and school, enhancing student basic academic skill levels, decreasing student truancy and disciplinary referrals, and forming school-home-community partnerships to provide additional support to the students.

The cross-age tutoring model is comprised of six components: (1) Cross-age tutoring, in which students who are at-risk of dropping out are employed as tutors for elementary school students; (2) Classes for the student tutors, where the tutors are provided with guidance and background instruction related to their tutoring; (3) Field trips in which the students (tutors and their tutees) learn about economic and cultural opportunities in the broader community; (4) Student recognition through award events in which all tutors are recognized for fulfilling their responsibilities as tutors; (5) Role modeling, in which successful Hispanic adults will speak to students regarding their careers; and (6) Parent involvement, in which parents are informed about the program, encouraged to support their child's involvement, and shown how to assist their child's efforts toward completing high school.

The sixth component, focusing on parents of at-risk students who are tutors in the program, involves several activities created specifically for involving parents in their child's education. The activities train parents in the following areas:

- Promoting Success At Home
- Communicating Effectively with Adolescents
- Planning for the Future
- Communicating Effectively with School Personnel

IDRA staff has held a workshop for parents on communicating effectively with adolescents and has presented a two-day conference for parents of six IDRA sponsored projects: Partners for Valued Youth, the Bilingual Pre-School Project, the Family English Literacy Project, the Valued Youth Partnership Program, and the Hispanic Mobilization for Dropout Prevention Project. The conference, held in April, informed parents about services available from community and civic organizations. Parents also learned about how they can help their children with schoolwork and how they can help their children develop strong, healthy self-concepts. In May, two more workshops will be held for parents of tutors in the cross-age tutoring program.

The workshop and the conference have been well-received by participants—who have realized the positive influence they can have on their children's education. IDRA staff will continue to guide and support parents in helping their children develop the positive self-concepts needed for succeeding in school and hope to show parents how to apply what they teach their children to their own lives and careers. ◊

IDRA Workshops for Parents of Pre-K Children

by *Alicia Salinas Sosa, Ph. D.*

IDRA staff have developed a series of workshops, part of their Pre-K Support Program, to meet the specific concerns of administrators, teachers, and parents of pre-kindergarten Limited English Proficient (LEP) children. Some of these concerns include that young children are "playing" too much, yet many agree that four-year-olds are not ready to learn concepts, such as the alphabet, taught in the first grade. The IDRA workshops, then, are designed to help participants teach four-year-olds the concepts and the skills appropriate for children at pre-k levels. For example, parents at these workshops learn about the importance of daily interaction with their children in the acquisition of language skills; they also learn important criteria for selecting an effective early childhood program. Parents attending the workshops have expressed a strong interest and willingness to work with the schools in order to enhance their children's opportunities for educational success.

"Workshop presenters emphasize that parents should understand how children learn language so that they know how to teach their children at home doing ordinary, everyday activities."

The first workshop, "Games and Toys," shows parents how to make toys, from inexpensive materials, that will introduce school readiness skills at home. Some of these toys include puppets, puzzles, and games that teach color and pattern matching and even lacing. Using these "toys," children learn important skills such as identifying colors and shapes, eye-hand motor skills, and vocabulary such as over, under, around, complete, match, in, out, and over.

At the second workshop, "Oral Language Development in the Home," parents learn the importance of daily verbal interaction with their children—talking to their children as they engage in daily activities: cooking, cleaning, gardening, shopping, recreating, etc. Parents learn how to teach concepts through language by talking to their children using specific, concrete words. They also learn how to define an object and enhance their child's understanding of a new concept by showing the child how it works in a natural situation or by using gestures. Most importantly, parents learn how to increase their children's listening, reading, and speaking skills through positive interaction. Parents are shown how to reinforce these skills by creating rich and varied experiences. They are also shown how to impress upon their children a knowledge of culture, pride, and sense of belonging. Workshop presenters emphasize that parents should understand how children learn language so that they know how to teach their children at home doing ordinary, everyday activities.

The third and final workshop focuses on increasing parental involvement in school activities. Parents learn how to communicate effectively with teachers and other school personnel, how to schedule a parent-teacher conference, and how to evaluate early childhood programs. Parents learn criteria for evaluating the quality of the classroom setting and materials and learn how a teacher interacts with her students. By visiting classrooms, parents observe how teachers gain children's attention and cooperation, how she incorporates aspects of the child's culture into the lesson, or even how she positions herself (sitting or kneeling) when dealing with a small child.

These IDRA pre-k workshops have received positive, enthusiastic responses from participants. Parents have noted how much they have learned about teaching and how much they have enjoyed being their children's first teachers.

Communicating With Parents Via Television

by *Liz Garza, M.A.*

Communicating with parents has long been a difficult and often unsuccessful task for school personnel. But the staff of the IDRA Family English Literacy Project have been able to communicate with parents of limited English proficient (LEP) students in an effective, yet untraditional way: via television. Through a weekly television program, "Aprendo/Enseño" shown on a local public access station in San Antonio, IDRA teaches parents how to improve their own literacy skills and how to influence their children's education.

Through their success in using television as a medium for reaching parents, staff have identified key elements for promoting parent involvement and improving how parents learn about language and educational processes. These key elements included in the content and design of each program are humor, direct and indirect instruction, the use of key vocabulary in context, settings familiar to parent viewers, and a variety of personages to relate the theme. A four-segment program is used to incorporate these elements into a successful method for communicating with parents.

Because the program is created primarily to instruct, lessons are designed to teach in a clear, appropriate, and effective manner. In the first part of the program, instruction is indirect: viewers learn by watching and listening to others, the characters in the program. Later, instruction is direct: viewers participate in the lesson by following instructions that require them to apply what they have learned. Then, they learn problem-solving techniques and how to interact with other family members. Throughout the program key vocabulary is introduced, repeated, and used in context—in both the dialogue among characters and in the instructions for viewing participants.

The stage settings in the programs are ones most familiar to viewers. Family living rooms, kitchens, school classrooms, and school libraries provide identifiable backdrops to the viewers as they learn about both literacy and parenting.

Humor and familiar characters are also used to teach parent viewers. The characters are created from people the viewers know, understand, and respect: two parents, a newscaster, and a teacher. Each character teaches something about school-parent relationships, and the newscaster teaches on a note of humor. The role of the parent is shown as one commanding intelligence, competence, and concern for the education of children. He is never casted as silly or deserving ridicule.

Project staff have found such techniques as teaching in familiar settings (i.e., the living room), and the use of humor and role models to be successful ways for teaching adults — both off and on the screen.◊

Parental Involvement Conference— A Wonderful Success

by *Frances M. Guzmán, M.Ed.*

On April 15 and 16, 1989, IDRA hosted parents from the San Antonio, Dallas, and Houston areas for the "Valuing Our Children/ El Valor de Nuestros Hijos" Parent Conference. The two-day event, held at the Embassy Suites, N.W., in San Antonio, was a gathering of parents who participate or have children involved in six of IDRA's projects: Bilingual Pre-School Project, the Family English Literacy Project, the Parent/Teacher Centers for Valued Youth Project, the Hispanic Mobilization for Dropout Prevention Project, and the Partners for Valued Youth Project.

The conference had several objectives. The first was to hold for the parents of the six projects an assembly, where each could learn more about how the other IDRA projects help at-risk students stay in school. A second goal was to provide a forum for parents and members of the community to express their ideas, concerns, and suggestions for helping students stay in school. A final goal included presentations by experts on children and schooling. Participants were able to learn more about what services are available to parents and students.

From the San Antonio area, parents and teachers from Edgewood, Northside, Harlandale, and South San Antonio school districts participated. Out-of-town participants included parents and school staff from the Dallas and Houston school districts.

Keynote addresses were given by Ms. Elvira Cisneros, San Antonio Volunteer of the Year, the Honorable Ciro Rodriguez, Texas State Representative, and Dr. Albert Cortez, IDRA's Dissemination and Evaluation Division director. Speakers from local schools and community organizations presented on various educational topics. During the two days, the conference held various discussions, displayed exhibits, and even gave door prizes. The Center for Public Health Policy Development, H.E.B. stores of San Antonio, Coca-Cola Bottling Company, and Mr. Alfonso Levine assumed some of the conference expenses.

Some of the most significant results of this conference include the creation of two products. The first is a bilingual newsletter for parents to be disseminated quarterly. The second is an annual conference to be held on the state level, with parents from all Texas school districts to be invited. Plans for this conference are already underway. An interest in networking and reaching a larger audience is clearly shown by participants' enthusiasm toward planning these two activities.

> ***"Parents have shown that when they are informed and have accessibility to school systems, they become an instrumental partner in the educational process."***

The positive attitude and the commitment of participants in this conference affirm an established IDRA belief: that parents do care very much about their children's education. Parents have shown that when they are informed and have accessibility to school systems, they become an instrumental partner in the educational process. ◊

ASPIRA and IDRA Join Forces to Battle the Dropout Problem

by *Mary Helen Napoles*

A new organization in San Antonio—the Hispanic Community Mobilization for Dropout Prevention (HCMDP), sponsored by the ASPIRA Association in Washington D.C.—has joined with IDRA to combat the increasing problem of Hispanic youth dropping out of school.

HCMDP is designed to mobilize and motivate Hispanic parents and the Hispanic community in order to curb high dropout rates among Latino youth. The organization provides practical information and recommendations, develops model programs, and helps parents and school personnel to implement these recommendations. Through increased community awareness and parent training, HCMDP helps organizations dealing with Latino youth to cooperate and collaborate with their families as all work together to keep Latino youth in school.

Parents who receive HCMDP training improve their English and Spanish communication skills so that they can more effectively deal with school staff and community leaders; improved language skills also helps them better understand school policies, rules and regulations, and the rationale behind such policies. The goal of this language training is to help parents speak out more confidently on all issues that affect their children, especially those issues that influence their academic development. Some parents will acquire basic language skills by working with school staff as volunteers, while others will be referred to agencies providing specific language instruction services.

The San Antonio HCMDP project will establish small parent-groups at ten sites, where participants will address area-specific problems and make recommendations on how to combat the dropout situation as it affects the children attending schools in their focus area. The groups will consist of concerned, dedicated, and determined parents whose main goals are to help our youth complete their education.

Parents who participate in HCMDP are making a difference in their children's education. Parents who want to join the organization should contact Mary Helen Napoles, Community Development Coordinator at IDRA, 5835 Callaghan, Suite 350, San Antonio, Texas 78228; (512) 684-8180. ◊

How Do I Value You? Let Me Count the Ways

by

Aurelio M. Montemayor, M.Ed.

Introduction

"Just because I can't write a good paragraph doesn't mean I'm stupid!" Rudy, a high school senior, was reacting to my amazed expression when he informed me that he had been awarded the science medal. I was surprised how clearly he saw my values. As an English teacher, I valued those students who had superior composition skills and devalued those that couldn't write a paragraph that I deemed acceptable.

The road to becoming director of the IDRA Center for the Prevention and Recovery of Dropouts really began with my first teaching assignment, high-school English in a small border town in South Texas. Three events from my early teaching years highlight important points about ways to value students. The opening anecdote shows that even a popular young teacher that considered himself progressive and accepting of all students was unconsciously but clearly transmitting his prejudices. The science teacher a few doors down the hall obviously thought differently about Rudy.

The second event happened over a semester's period of time in my third year of teaching English III. The classes were clearly tracked, e.g., my first period had the repeaters and those that had marginally passed sophomore English. My afternoon classes were comprised of predominantly A and B students. I had been under pressure to teach students how to conduct a research paper, yet was reluctant to walk students through the tedious process of copying dull facts from encyclopedias and other reference sources on 3x5 cards and attempting to identify an intelligible (forget interesting), relevant, or meaningful document. Instead, I assisted students from each period to organize a class research project, divide the tasks, and draft a paper to which everyone had contributed. The projects yielded interesting, relevant, meaningful, and even controversial findings. (During the data collection phase of the projects, the superintendent called a meeting of all high-school juniors to put a stop to some of the door-to-door interviews the students had been conducting.) By the end of the project, students from each class period produced informative papers on significant issues.

The third incident was truly surprising. Several students approached me to help them organize and sponsor a car club. (I didn't even have a driver's license, and to this day know only how to service the car with gas and oil.) The car buffs informed me that they didn't participate in any school-sponsored extracurricular activities and weren't especially interested in any one that existed. They did, however, want to establish a formally recognized school club and saw me as the least troublesome teacher and most likely to support their club. I accepted. I became the first sponsor of the San Felipe Border Rods. It was a bumpy ride. Yet they elected officers, drafted by-laws, conducted meetings, and did all those things that humans of all ages do when they form a club around common interests.

These three experiences remain with me as illustrations of the positive and negative expectations I've held of students. It was necessary for me to step out of the mold of a traditional language arts teacher to realize that one of my students, though seemingly weak in writing compositions, was a budding scientist. I had to overcome the assumption that my first-period class was too slow to conduct a self-designed community survey. And I had to accept a car club as an important and meaningful student activity. All these cases called for the unconditional regard and valuing of the students.

Framework for Solutions

Dr. José Cárdenas, whose brilliance goes far beyond signing my paycheck, summarizes effective dropout prevention programs with the letters **V-S-P**: **valuing, support**, and **parents**. In all successful programs for the education of at-risk youth, a **valuing** of the students occurs in ways in which they are not valued in regular and traditional school programs; **support** mechanisms are much more extensive than those commonly found in regular and traditional situations; and finally, **parents** are involved in mean-

ingful relationships with the school, in relationships not commonly found in regular and traditional situations. This article focuses on the "V" - the valuing

Barriers to Valuing Students

Students at-risk of dropping out, as a rule, aren't selected for positive recognition or for leadership roles. Many are social isolates and are not inclined to participate in traditional school activities. If students are identified for special services, they are usually chosen for something they lack or for dysfunctional behavior. Both students and teachers see remediation and correction programs as a stigma.

Teachers and staff resist giving at-risk students responsibility, recognition or leadership roles. Concerns range from fears of rewarding dysfunctional behavior to despair in the student's inability to handle responsibility, follow instructions or behave maturely.

A major breakthrough in the student's life results from experiencing success in school and peer activities. However, such a breakthrough is precluded by the abovementioned prejudices, which lock students and teachers in a vicious cycle: students are not participating in school and therefore dropping out and they are dropping out because they are not participating.

Valuing

Yet, despite the obstacles, some schools and programs have managed to break that cycle. Students that were formerly considered "problems" have become "solutions." From a gang leader that becomes the protector of the student mural in the school hallway, to the previously failing student who becomes a successful tutor for a younger student, and in the process succeeds in school: Examples abound from across the United States of ways that at-risk students are valued. And this "valuing" directly leads to their success in school.

Traditional and Nontraditional Ways to Value Students

Schools have numerous traditional ways of valuing students, which include:

- Awards for achievement
- Appointment by faculty to positions of responsibility
- Election by peers to positions of responsibility in student activities
- Publicity of achievements through different communications media
- Hiring them to assist with school functions and activities.

The challenge is to extend these traditional ways to at-risk students and expand the variety of ways of valuing them.

Specific Examples with At-Risk Students

Cross-age Tutoring. Middle- and high-school students in San Antonio school districts tutor elementary students several times a week for an hourly wage.

Peer Counseling. Dropouts who return to high school in Tucson, Arizona work with school counselors and serve as peer counselors for one period during the regular school day. They also give motivational speeches to incoming freshmen.

Student Artists. Students from the Bronx, New York who have experienced severe problems in the regular high school setting learn about literature through artistic renderings of the themes of the world's greatest literature. They produce large canvases and works of art and sell them for significant amounts of money, which fund the continuation of their projects.

Student Scientists. Underachieving students in science from Roosevelt High School are selected as part of a team with a mobile science lab and make the wonders of the physical and biological world come alive for East Los Angeles elementary students.

Health Leaders. A group of female middle-school students in Brownsville, Texas, after discussing the problems of drug-abuse, decided to form their own "Just Say No" club. Most of them were considered by their teachers as being most prone to abusing drugs, and the club was formed on their own initiative.

Video Production. Students in the San Antonio area improve written and oral communication skills

while producing quality and high-interest television programs.

Abuse Prevention. South Texas students, themselves considered at-risk of abusing drugs and alcohol, become group leaders in educating their peers about the adverse effects of drug and alcohol use.

Peer Mentors. Junior-high and high-school students in Austin become big brothers/sisters to younger students and motivate, counsel, and sometimes even tutor them.

Social Scientists. Students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds in rural Appalachia document their community's local folkloric traditions and other sociological phenomena. They produce a series of journals sold in major bookstores. A Spanish-dominant teenager in Tucson, without previous experience in any aspect of television production and minimal success in the regular classroom, plans and executes a televised interview of the director of a historical building in Tucson.

Newsletter Publishers. A fifth-grade class that had developed a reputation for chewing up teachers, feared even by substitutes, and without a permanent teacher for the first six weeks, eventually published a bilingual newsletter with original articles, poetry, and art by the students themselves.

These specific examples are representative, but not exhaustive of possible ways to value students. Student-centered activities explicitly designed to strengthen the student's self-worth offer strong incentives for students to remain in school. The underlying premises of such activities are that the student contains vast, untapped potential; can help peers in many ways; lead other students; and can excel in a variety of traditional and nontraditional ways. Consider the variety of options. Create alternative leadership roles for students and consider a wide array of roles. A useful framework for devising ways to value students includes:

- *Curriculum Builders*: having students develop instructional materials for their peers or younger students through group tasks, community surveys, documentation of peer feelings and experiences, conducting taped interviews, creating and cataloguing artistic endeavors, and using applied mechanics or carpentry;
- *Teachers*: tutoring peers, younger students, and adults;
- *Communicators*: publishing newsletters or student literature, developing public service announcements for mass media, directing/managing student assemblies, organizing and leading student clubs;
- *Resources for Youth*: counseling or mentoring students, staffing hotlines for runaways or other troubled youth, mediating youth-youth and youth-adult conflicts, polling peers about issues of concern;
- *Community Services*: assisting in social service programs, planning, and conducting community beautification projects, raising money for service projects.

Resources Needed

- One or several adults who act upon their beliefs that the students have tremendous worth, potential, and value.
- An expanded definition of what constitutes feasible activities for students and the many ways to give students opportunities to show their intrinsic value.
- Creating a network of support for experimenting with nontraditional activities.
- Delegating responsibility to students and allowing for mistakes.
- Accepting interruptions, digressions, and paths not normally taken, especially with these students.
- Encouraging positive interaction with students you normally wouldn't otherwise.
- Allowing student choices and decisions, even when these seem trivial or unimportant.

If you are a principal — identify a willing and eager teacher who has already shown success with "at-risk" students. Review the array of options. Start small. Encourage. Give it time. Expect surprises. Observe

all successes keenly and give recognition.

If you are a teacher — plan out your activity and approach the principal with a feasible plan. Clearly define your objectives and know how they relate to keeping kids in school and learning.

If you are a parent — identify a willing teacher and together forge a plan, or approach the principal with a realistic plan.

Ultimately, all students are valuable: none is expendable. For many reasons, some seem harder to value than others. Yet there are countless adults who bear witness to the tremendous positive resource that children are, though they might have generally been regarded as worthless. And if you truly value them, like love in Elizabeth Barret Browning's sonnet, you could never finish counting the ways.

Resources

Videotape - Student Leadership for At-Risk Students • 2 hrs. $39.95
Contact IDRA • 5835 Callaghan • Suite 350 • San Antonio, TX 78228

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Addressing School Dropouts

by *José A. Cárdenas, Ed.D.*

School dropouts has become the dominant theme of American education in the second half of the decade of the 1980s. Efforts at the local, state, and national levels are focusing on the reduction of the number of students leaving the schools prior to graduation.

Though the high incidence of students dropping out of school justifies the attention this aspect of education has been receiving, it is neither a new nor a separate phenomenon characteristic of this era. Dropout rates have been higher in the past without demanding a fraction of the national attention now being given to the problem.

School dropouts is a new label and a new emphasis brought about by the appearance of a new interest in the schools, the interest of the economic sector and its need for a better educated work force. The disappearance of the need for unskilled labor and the emerging need for skilled labor in a more technical and service-oriented society has led to an extensive concern for a better educated work force, which in turn is dependent upon a significant improvement in the quantity and quality of elementary and secondary education.

Basic to the prevention of a massive exodus of students from the schools prior to graduation is the need for a drastic improvement in the performance of students in school. Though teenage pregnancy, substance abuse, gang activity, and other social ills may be identified as reasons for high dropout rates, these problems are usually secondary, and in many cases, a result of the much more basic problem of poor performance, frustration, and hopelessness in school work.

For the past three years, IDRA has conducted an intensive study of Hispanic dropouts in a Texas urban school district. Hispanic students were targeted for study because local, state, and national studies indicate that Hispanics have the highest dropout rate of any ethnic group in the country. During this study, information was gathered through 746 personal, individual interviews and 337 telephone interviews of students who had left school, students who remained in school, and parents of these two groups. Information was also collected through surveys of and meetings with principals, teachers, and counselors in 27 middle and high school campuses in the district. Additional data were obtained through district archival records, reviews of documents related to dropout prevention and recovery, and sessions with district personnel and advisory committees.

As a result of this research effort, substantial information surfaced which is useful in addressing the dropout problem. Past efforts to remedy this problem have often been dysfunctional and counterproductive in that school and community responses are not compatible with research findings on the characteristics of school dropouts.

> *"A sensible way of addressing the dropout problem is to start with research data on the fundamental causes and contributing factors to dropping out of school. The next logical step is to develop responses which address these causes and contributing factors."*

A sensible way of addressing the dropout problem is to start with research data on the fundamental causes and contributing factors to dropping out of school. The next logical step is to develop responses which address these causes and contributing factors.

The following information gathered in our three-year study provides a sound beginning for the formulation of appropriate responses.

Research Question 1:

What student and parent characteristics affect a student's propensity to stay in or drop out of school?

Age (at time of interview)

- Overagedness at grade level increases the propensity for dropping out of school. Students who had been retained in grade had almost double the dropout rate than students not retained.

Birthplace and Length of U.S. Residence

- The majority of school leavers and school attenders are U.S. born, and not immigrant children.
- Students whose mothers were not born in the U.S. had a lower dropout rate than students whose mothers were U.S. born.
- Dropout rates for students whose mothers were not born in the U.S. diminished after the mother had been in the U.S. for at least ten years.

Parent's Education

- A parent's level of education affects the chances of dropping out of school. In general, the lower the parent's educational level, the greater the chances the student will drop out.

Employment

- Most parents of Hispanic students, whether school attenders or school leavers, work. Most mothers work in service maintenance jobs such as house cleaning. Most fathers work as skilled laborers which include mechanics and carpenters.

  The student's chances of staying in school are affected by whether or not the father works. If the father is not working, the odds of a student dropping out are increased.

Household Characteristics

- Students who live in households with both parents have better chances of staying enrolled in school.
- Students who have children of their own at home run a greater risk of leaving school.

Youth's Current Status

- Over half of all students who have left school are not working. One in five is married and has children.
- Most students who have left school are not reenrolled in school, are not pursuing a GED, and have not entered job-training programs.

Research Question 2:

Does language determine whether or not a student stays enrolled in school?

- Most students, both school leavers and school attenders, speak English and Spanish at home.
- If students believe that they do not read or write English very well, they are more likely to drop out of school.
- Hispanic students whose first language is Spanish have a better chance of remaining in school.
- Hispanic students whose parents encouraged bilingualism are also more likely to remain in school.

Research Question 3:

Do a student's attitudes and perceptions determine whether or not he/she stays in or drops out of school?

Youth's Likes and Dislikes

- Students tend to remain in school if they like school personnel, feel positively about teachers and administrators, and perceive both school personnel and other students as liking youth with positive attributes (e.g., "good," "polite").
- Students who have left school perceive teachers as disliking Hispanics.
- Students who have left school perceive teachers and other students as liking negative characteristics in students (e.g., gang members, dropouts).

Helps and Hindrances

- Most students believe study skills are most helpful for staying in school while peer pressure and harassment are the greatest hindrances.

Importance of Finishing High School

- Although the majority of students recognize the importance of finishing high school, those who leave attach less importance to it and feel that their parents think likewise.

Leaving School: First Thoughts and Reasons

- Students have a greater chance of leaving school if they first considered leaving during the transition school years (grades 7 and 9).
- Students who had left school indicated they left because school work was too difficult and they had to work.
- Among students who left school, problems with school personnel and pregnancy were the principal reasons for leaving.
- Students still enrolled in school cited pregnancy and the need to work as reasons for leaving school, should they decide to leave.

Ethnic Composition

- Most school leavers and school attenders would change their school's ethnic composition: Hispanic students enrolled in school feel there are not enough white students; Hispanic students who leave school feel there are too many white and black students.
- Both school attenders and school leavers feel there are not enough Hispanic teachers.

Parents' Perceptions

- Parents' belief that both they and the school can do something to help students stay in school is conducive to students remaining in school.
- Parents perceive that they and the school can make the greatest contribution to students staying in school by providing support in classroom and instructional organization.

Research Question 4:

What is the relationship between participation in school and out-of-school activities, and staying in or dropping out of school?

Youth

- Most students, both school attenders and school leavers, participated in middle and high school activities (mainly sports).
- Involvement in school and out-of-school activities increases a student's chances of remaining in school.
- Encouragement from parents for students to participate in school activities is conducive to staying in school.

Parents

- Most parents visit the school for meetings with teachers and would visit more often if parents had more time, were more interested, or if meetings were held at more convenient times.
- Students have a greater chance of staying enrolled in school if their parents visit the school for positive reasons (such as awards ceremonies).
- Students have a greater chance of staying in school if their parents show an interest in school programs.
- Students whose parents visit school mainly for discipline problems and teacher/parent meetings have a greater chance of leaving school.
- Parents of school dropouts feel they visit the school too often for disciplinary purposes.
- Most parents of both school leavers and school attenders feel there should be more visits for parent meetings and school programs.

Research Question 5:

What is the relationship between schooling history and dropping out of school?

Mobility

- The more times a student changes schools, the greater are the chances of leaving school.

Work

- Working more than 15 hours per week while in school increases the chances of a student leaving school.
- Most students who work while in school do so in service maintenance jobs in order to have spending money or to help with home expenses.

- Most students who work while in school earn slightly above the minimum wage.
- All students who worked more than 40 hours while in school ultimately left school.

Grades and Retention
- Receiving failing grades at the elementary, middle or high school level increases the chances of dropping out of school.
- Being retained at grade level increases the chances of dropping out of school during the middle and high school years.

Absenteeism
- A high absentee rate (i.e., more than 11 days per school year) increases the chances of a student leaving school.
- Students who leave school frequently cite "feeling out of place," and boring classes as reasons for absenteeism.

Early Schooling
- Children who attend nursery school tend to remain in school through graduation.

Research Question 6:
What is the relationship between a supportive environment and dropping out of school?

Relationship with Others
- Most students, both school leavers and school attenders, get along with parents and friends, but students who remain enrolled in school feel more comfortable discussing school or personal problems with school personnel, parents, and friends.

Encouragement
- Most school attenders and school leavers are encouraged to remain in school but those who remain enrolled receive multiple encouragement from their family and school and church personnel.
- Most students know good friends or family members who have dropped out of school.
- A student's peers are the most likely persons to encourage a student to leave school.
- Students who leave school are encouraged by school personnel to do so.

Classroom Participation
- Students who do not ask questions when they do not understand a lesson tend to leave school.

Study Aids
- Odds of staying in school are increased if study aids such as a quiet place to study, encyclopedias, a typewriter, and books are available in the home.

Family
- Family problems including conflicts with parents and relatives, household responsibilities, or financial concerns increase the odds of leaving school.
- Most parents of students who left school report no notification by the school regarding problems with their children and maintain there were, in fact, no problems to report.

Research Question 7:
What is the relationship between involvement with gang activity, substance abuse, or criminal behavior and staying in or dropping out of school?

- Students who participate in gang activity, use alcohol or drugs, and are involved in criminal activity are more likely to leave school.

Research Question 8:
What effects do student and parent aspirations and expectations have on students' propensity to drop out or stay enrolled in school until graduation?

Future Employment
- Students who believe they will reach their career goals stand a greater chance of remaining in school.
- Most student leavers and attenders expect to be working in five years and want to work as professionals, technicians, or office and clerical staff.
- Students enrolled in school expect to work as professionals; students who leave school have lower expectations and believe they will be employed as skilled craft workers rather than as professionals.
- Students who believe their parents expect them to work in order to support the family run a greater risk of dropping out.

Future Education
- Most students who leave school expect to earn a GED, while most students who remain in school expect a college degree.
- Most students who have left school are planning to return to school the next fall but need support (e.g., child-care, financial, counseling) in order to be able to return.

Parents' Aspirations and Expectations
- Most parents of students in school have high expectations for their children and believe their children will attain their goals.
- Most parents of school dropouts have similarly high expectations for their children and believe their children will attain their goals.
- The odds of leaving school are increased if parents expect their children to join the military or marry before high school graduation.

Research Question 9:
What student, school or family/community characteristics have been found to predict dropping out?

Dropout Profile
The typical Hispanic dropout:
- Was 17 years old when he/she left school; however, almost 40% of school leavers were under age 16.
- Was single; however, 11% of school leavers were married.
- Had parents who were married when he/she left school; however, 19% were in homes with one parent.
- Had a father working full-time as a skilled worker; however, 16% were either working part-time, not work-

ing, or retired; 14% had no father or male guardian in the home.
- Had a mother working full or part-time in the field of service maintenance; however, 44% were not working; 3% had no mother or female guardian in the home.
- Is unemployed.
- If working, was doing skilled-labor or service maintenance work to help out at home financially.
- Would require school-related assistance in order to return to school, i.e., different school, nice teachers, GED assistance, flexible hours, and school safety.

Parent Notification
- Over one third of the parents were not notified by the school that their children had dropped out of school.
- Most parents report their children left school in the ninth grade and want them to return to school.
- Most parents believe their children want to return but need support in order to do so.

Predictive Variables

Multiple regression analyses were conducted on parent and student survey data and student archival records for the purpose of identifying variables which would predict which students were most likely to drop out of school.

Results showed that the chances of a student leaving school before graduation were increased if the student
- Was overage for the grade level.
- Did not attend kindergarten.
- Did not discuss problems with counselors.
- Had fathers who were born outside the U.S.
- Changed middle schools.
- Used drugs.

Recommendations

Recommendations for the prevention and recovery of dropouts were formed on the basis of current research literature, this study's findings, and the results of focus-group interviews conducted with a group of administrators, counselors, and teachers selected from each of the twelve campuses participating in this study. The focus-group interview used a force-field structure for a guided discussion about needs and solutions to the Hispanic dropout problem.

All this information points to the fact that comprehensive measures are needed to keep Hispanic students in school and succeeding with their studies. To frame our recommendations and give them a comprehensive context, IDRA has diagramed the basic relationships in the education of children with a triangle: the student, the school, and the family/community (see Figure 1). These recommendations call for changes in all three points and are couched in a set of guiding principles. Each principle is positive and visionary, interrelated, and interdependent. These principles are:

1. Strategies must be family-centered,
2. Strategies must be student-centered,
3. Strategies must be campus-focused, and
4. Strategies must accelerate learning.

Family-centered strategies consider parental involvement as crucial and recognize the value and strength of the Hispanic family. Student-centered strategies focus on the student rather than on the program or curriculum; student motivation, engagement, and achievement become the measures of success. Campus-focused strategies involve the entire campus in responding to the needs of students rather than to a set of programs for students labeled at-risk of dropping out. Accelerated learning strategies ensure that at-risk students are taught at a faster pace and are targeted for success.

Our recommendations address each major audience in the outline and the three points of our triangle. They also give each group validity, support, and responsibility.

Specific recommendations are made to each audience. The first audience addressed is the community. External organizations, the private sector, public/private social services, and other groups outside the educational system constitute the community. For this specific audience, a coordination of services, activities, schedules and information must be provided to each campus with at-risk students. This involves utilizing existing resources and finding additional ones to provide support.

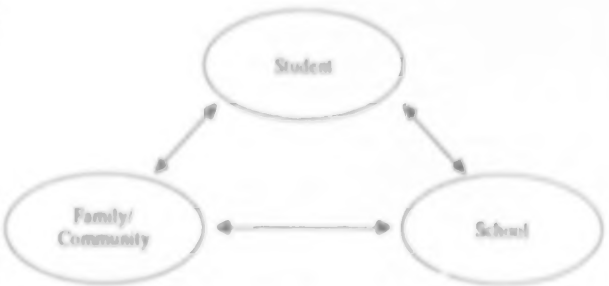
The next audience is the school board. This body must expand policy that promotes the utilization and coordination of all outside resources, encourages access to schools, and allocates the necessary resources needed for training and support. Another recommendation is that continuous reporting be done in order to assess progress.

The third audience is the superintendent and central office staff. Overall recommendations to this group include directing a coordinated effort of all services, implementing and monitoring plans district-wide, and providing the resources necessary for full implementation of plans addressing at-risk students.

At the campus level, the major actors (principal, support staff, teachers, parents, and students) are given very specific recommendations. In general, however, the campus should have a team approach which provides support, interventions, outreach, training, and resources to all of the parties in order that viable solutions are found and implemented. The campus principal is charged with directing and monitoring all plans or activities while the other personnel are charged with implementing them. There must be a partnership which helps all students.

The plan incorporates such important variables as new instructional options, cross departmental coordination, a recovery initiative, and the identification of new funding sources or better use of existing resources. ◊

Figure 1
The Interrelated and Interdependent Roles of Student, School, and Family/Community



EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS: THE MULTICULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

A Strategy for Responding to the Needs of At-Risk Students

by *Bradley Scott, M.A.*

Throughout the Desegregation Assistance Center - South Central Collaborative (DAC-SCC) region, the Center has received an increasing number of requests for training and technical assistance in effective schools research activity. These increasing numbers of requests are attributable to school-district efforts in developing effective schools plans to improve student achievement.

For such plans to be most effective, I would caution the reader to bear in mind that effective schooling must:

- have "the multicultural perspective"
- respond to the entire, diverse student population
- produce comparable desired results for all students and consider the full breadth of their diversity.

We in education are involved in a human-intensive business. It is our task and goal to create citizens who are educated, competent, responsible and productive. It is our hope that these citizens exhibit high moral integrity; are imbued with a strong sense of what is right, just and fair. We further hope that their world view is such that, upon graduation from the public schools, students have been inculcated with a perspective which leads them to have a high sense of internal control and internal responsibility. This kind of perspective will move them toward maturity and adulthood on a solid foundation. We should also hope that they hold people and the notion of humanity in the highest regard, with the greatest measure of respect.

We have always known that the task is not easy. We must, however, hold the indefatigable belief that it can be accomplished. We have seen the fruits of our labor. Many of our public schools have been effective in producing such students as I have already described.

Research has indicated that an array of factors makes schools effective. There are specific elements which effective schools have in common regarding the principal, teachers, the environment, the school program, and the assessment and revision procedures. Some of these common elements include a principal who:

1. takes an assertive instructional/leadership role
2. is task and goal-oriented
3. is well organized
4. conveys high expectations for students and staff
5. defines policies and communicates them clearly
6. makes frequent classroom visits
7. is highly visible and available to students and staff
8. gives strong support to the teaching staff
9. is adept in parent and community relations.

Research tells us that teachers in effective schools:

1. have and use high verbal and conceptual ability
2. are concerned about upgrading their professional skills
3. know the subject they teach
4. understand the principles of learning and child development
5. understand the characteristics of their students and respond accordingly
6. spend more time actively teaching in the classroom
7. assign less busy work
8. generate more learning activities
9. have high expectations of all students
10. are absent less frequently.

Regarding the environment, effective schools:

1. have an orderly school climate
2. administer discipline which is clear, firm, and consistent
3. have a cooperative/family atmosphere
4. have few classroom interruptions
5. have strong parental involvement in student learning
6. have positive community relations and welcome the community's support and involvement
7. have adequate materials and facilities
8. have a well-kept school physical plant.

The instructional program in effective schools:

1. is goal-oriented
2. provides for the assessment and monitoring of student progress
3. gives immediate feedback to students regarding school work
4. is appropriate to the learner
5. emphasizes basic skills
6. provides continuity across grades through appropriate curricular scoping and sequencing
7. provides for effective grouping for instruction
8. manages instructional time
9. adjusts lessons to meet student needs.

Finally, with regards to assessment and revision, effective schools:

1. provide on-going assessment of student progress
2. communicate student progress to students, parents, and the community
3. evaluate school effectiveness periodically
4. insure that instructional improvement is viewed as a shared responsibility

5. focus on problem identification and remedy
6. maintain a dynamic program, always open to improvement.

In the report, *America's Shame, America's Hope, Twelve Million Youth At Risk*, Kenneth B. Clark (1988) comments that a disproportionate number of at-risk youth come from socially, racially, and economically disadvantaged groups in society. He suggests that public schools treat these students with a degree of hostility:

> . . . At-risk youth are consciously or unconsciously perceived and treated as if they were expendable. The revelation of their expendability begins in the early stages of their education where they are subjected to inferior schools and low standards of learning. Early in their lives they are programmed to be victims of the prophecy that they cannot benefit from the standards and quality which are provided for children from more privileged groups. This pattern of inferior education, of low standards and expectations, continues through secondary school and culminates in failures, dropouts, and pushouts. The victims become aware that they are ignored, rejected, and neglected, and that schools, which are the inescapable agents of society, are not preparing them to play an economically and socially constructive role. They are the unavoidable victims of the larger pattern of social, racial, and educational discrimination . . . (p. ii)

If "effective schools" were infused with a multicultural perspective, then they would truly be operating in the best interest of each student. They would empower students and prepare them for the realities of life, this world, and our society.

What would these schools look like? What would they do on a daily basis? How would these schools be organized? Upon what set of principles would they operate?

Certainly these schools would show a clear acceptance and inclusion of the goals of multicultural education. Christine L. Bennett presents a set of goals in her book *Comprehensive Multicultural Education: Theory and Practice*, which include:

1. *The development of historical perspectives and consciousness*
   The curriculum of the school would be arranged and taught such that each student would build and develop a sense of pride and ethnic identity. Students would learn about the world views, heritage, and contributions of diverse cultures. They would become aware of their own culture and way of life.

2. *The development of intercultural competence*
   The individual learns the ability to interpret intentional communication (both verbal and nonverbal) and the customs in cultural styles different from one's own. This goal clearly recognizes and accepts that communication and interaction among persons of different cultures can be hindered by culturally conditioned assumptions about others.

3. *The reduction of racism and ethnic prejudice and discrimination*
   This goal attempts to help students clarify their values and build moral reasoning skills to develop understandings, attitudes, and behaviors that are consistent with society's fundamental ideals such as liberty, justice, and equal opportunity.

4. *The development of social actions skills*
   This goal works to develop within students the knowledge, attitudes, and skills for achieving political, social, and economic changes. It also stresses the importance of developing certain other skills such as self-expression, decision-making, and problem resolution.

Although I have presented these four goals as discrete items, understand that they are interrelated and should be interwoven into the overall curriculum so that separate subject areas and courses emphasize those goals that are most effectively dealt with within the boundaries of that subject or course.

James Banks goes further and presents six goals of multicultural/multiethnic education. Of particular interest is the sixth goal for its emphasis on academic pursuits — the same emphasis engendered in effective schools activities.

Goals of Multiethnic Education

Goal 1
To help individuals to gain a greater understanding of self by viewing themselves in relationship to people who are ethnically and culturally different.

Goal 2
To acquaint ethnic group members with the cultures of others not to suggest that other cultures are better, or worse, but different, and meaningful to those who hold those perspectives.

Goal 3
To provide students with cultural and ethnic alternatives.

Goal 4
To provide all students with skills, knowledge and attitudes to function within their own culture, the mainstream culture, and across ethnic cultures.

Goal 5
To reduce the pain of discrimination which members of some racial and ethnic groups experience because of their unique racial, physical, and cultural characteristics [the "pain of marginality"].

Goal 6
To help students master academic skills such as reading, writing, and computation, using culturally relevant curriculum.

In addition to the goals being manifested in the curriculum, two conditions must be present to insure the attainment of the abovestated goals.

1. Teachers would have positive expectations for all students.

   Studies by Geneva Gay and Ray Rist clearly show that White teachers can have lower expectations for Black and Hispanic students than for their White counterparts.

   This madness of lower expectations is clearly a matter of negative racial and/or ethnic prejudice. Whether a student can learn, achieve, and excel is not a function of race. Where teachers assume otherwise, they create a situation and environment where students fail to learn, achieve, and excel because of their teacher's perceptions and expectations about the function of race.

2. The learning environment would support positive interracial contact by accomplishing four practices which Gordon Allport proposed:

   1) The staff would insure that contact between groups is sufficiently intimate to produce reciprocal knowledge and understanding.

   2) Members of various groups would share equal status.

   3) People would cooperate to achieve common goals.

   4) Institutional support would encourage intergroup contact in the schools.

We would also see a school where, as Cheryl Berstein Cohen describes it:

1. Courses would be enriched by including multiple perspectives on American culture and history so that students would be exposed to alternative interpretations of history and contemporary society in order to free them from their "ethnic encapsulation."

2. Students of various ethnic identities would know that they are valued members of the school community. They would see it reflected in all facets of school life.

3. Schools would help students to have positive interpersonal reactions with individuals of various ethnic groups in curricular and co-curricular activities.

4. Schools would reach beyond textbooks to the communities from whence students come in order to complement classroom learning and augment role models available to all students.

5. Schools would strive to expand students' knowledge of ethnic groups and their contributions through reading and study about ethnic diversity. They would know that there are Black, Hispanic, first American, Asian writers, scientists, mathematicians, doctors, lawyers, thinkers, heroes, and so on.

6. Schools would stress the value of ethnic diversity and national unity. The lessons on core values would foster notions of unity among Americans who, though we are different, are inextricably tied to one another by common sinuous fibers that make us all Americans.

We should accept that our schools can be exciting places of infinite possibilities. We should accept that we can make a difference by what we do, and how we do it. We should accept that our schools can uplift every student; value that student as important; give every student every opportunity; be a place of rich and rewarding diversity where every student is accepted as he or she is, respected, encouraged, and educated to be the best that he or she can be.

Until we conduct our schools in a way that responds to different students in different ways to produce comparable outcomes, we will continue to place students at risk. We can do better than that, we must do better. There is a compelling call from the future which requires that we do better than we have done.

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PARTNERS FOR VALUED YOUTH: YEAR ONE PROGRESS REPORT

by *Josie Danini Supik, M.A.*

The Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA), in collaboration with school district personnel, has developed an instructional program designed to reduce dropout rates among Hispanic middle-school children who are limited-English proficient (LEP) and who are at risk of leaving school. The Partners for Valued Youth (PVY) Program was funded in April 1988 by the U.S. Department of Education Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs (OBEMLA). The PVY Program is one of four Innovative Approaches Research Project (IARP) programs funded by OBEMLA and administered by Development Associates, Inc., a governmental management and consulting firm. Dr. Charlene Rivera of Development Associates serves as IARP Director.

The PVY Program is a research and demonstration project designed to meet the following critical objectives: (a) reduce dropout rates, (b) enhance students' basic academic skills, (c) strengthen students' perception of self and school, (d) decrease student truancy, (e) reduce student disciplinary referrals, and (f) form school-home-community partnerships to increase the level of support available to students. By addressing these objectives, the PVY program is designed to keep students in school and help students set goals that make continued attendance meaningful.

After one year of implementation, the Partners for Valued Youth Program has had a positive effect on the lives of most of the participants. The psychometric measures and the surveys of the participants are positive. Tutors have a better self-concept, have more positive perceptions of school quality, are receiving better reading grades, are missing school less, have a greater sense of responsibility and want to continue in the program next year. Tutor wages and the attendant recognition of their work appears to be a critical component, especially in light of most of the tutors' financial constraints. It appears also that tutors' realization that they have made a positive impact on another person has tremendous drawing and staying power. A summary of the major findings from the PVY program's first year of implementation are presented for each of the questions which guided the design of the research project.

Research Question 1:
How is the cross-age tutoring program actually implemented at each site?

The PVY model is being implemented in two public school districts in San Antonio, Texas having low property wealth and large concentrations of Hispanic and limited-English-proficient students. The model incorporates six core components that illustrate the school-home-community environment of the student. The six components are: (I) Classes for Student Tutors, (II) The Tutoring Sessions, (III) Field Trips, (IV) Role Modeling, (V) Parent Involvement, and (VI) Student Recognition.

A total of 95 seventh grade tutors participated in the PVY program during the 1988-1989 school year. Each tutor was assigned elementary school tutees who were selected by their elementary school teachers as needing help with their basic skills. In addition, 95 seventh-grade students were randomly selected as a comparison group in order to examine the impact of the program on at-risk students. Both tutors and comparison group students were selected on the basis of two criteria: (1) limited English proficiency (LEP) as defined by the State of Texas guidelines, and (2) reading below grade level.

Research Question 2:
Does the cross-age tutoring program have an effect on the dropout rate of the tutors when compared to the dropout rate of the comparison group of the campus and district?

The data needed to answer this question will be available in the fall of 1989. Preliminary data indicate that four tutors withdrew from school in 1988-1989. Three of the four tutors enrolled in another campus due to family mobility, etc.; only one tutor is a confirmed dropout. Comparison group and district dropout data will be available next school year and will be included in the final report.

Research Question 3:
Does the cross-age tutoring program have an effect on the tutee's academic achievement, language proficiency, self-concept, attitude toward school, attendance and disciplinary record?

Data on academic achievement, language proficiency, attendance and disciplinary records of tutees

will be available next school year. Analyses of these data will be included in the final report. Analyses of tutee self-concept and quality of school life scores are summarized below. For this interim period, data are only descriptive since no comparison group data were collected. School level comparison data will be collected from campus archives in order to meaningfully anchor increases or decreases in all variables.

The Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale was administered on a pre-post basis to all tutees above the third grade; no comparison data are available. No significant pre to post differences were found on the total self-concept score or on five of the six subscale scores. However, the posttest score for the Happiness and Satisfaction scale was significantly lower than the pretest.

Tutees above the third grade also completed the Quality of School Life Scale. Across all campuses tutees raised their mean total and subscale scores from pretest to posttest. The Reactions to Teachers subscale scores were significantly more positive after participation in the program. Elementary teachers also reported tutee satisfaction and academic gains as a result of participation.

Research Question 4:
Does the cross-age tutoring program have an effect on the tutor's academic achievement, language proficiency, self-concept, attitude toward school, attendance and disciplinary record?

After one year of participating in the PVY Program, tutors are receiving significantly higher reading grades than a comparable group of students who did not participate in the program. Tutors also have significantly higher self-concept and more positive perceptions of school than the comparison group. In addition, tutors had a significantly lower absentee rate after participating in the program. The results of individual variables are summarized below.

Academic achievement was examined using three measures: grades, minimum competency test scores and standardized achievement test scores. Data were collected on a pre-post basis for both tutors and a randomly selected comparison group.

After one year of participation in the PVY Program, tutors received significantly higher reading grades than did comparison group students. No significant differences were found in posttest English and mathematics grade performance between tutors and comparison group students. Females received significantly higher grades in mathematics; no gender differences were found in reading or English. Significant differences across campuses were also found with wide ranges in average grades. At the end of the 1988-1989 school year, three PVY tutors made the honor roll and nine came within one grade of doing so.

Analyses of scores on the Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills (TEAMS) yielded significantly higher mathematics and writing scores for comparison group students. No posttest differences in reading were found between tutor and comparison groups. Girls scored significantly higher than boys on the writing subtest.

No significant pre to post differences were observed between the tutor and comparison groups in six standardized achievement test scores. Significant differences were evident between boys and girls in the language test scores, with girls obtaining higher scores.

Significant increases in tutor reading grades are consistent with the reading focus of the tutoring classes which students attended as part of the PVY Program. After participation in PVY during the 1989-1990 school year, it is anticipated that this significant and positive increase in reading grades will be followed by similar increases in standardized achievement measures. This pattern would be consistent with the research literature which points out that program impact is most likely to been seen first in more proximate measures such as grades and later in less proximate measures such as nationally standardized achievement tests.

In the area of language proficiency tutors increased their pre-to-posttest perceived understanding, speaking and writing of Spanish. This is consistent with tutor use of Spanish in tutee bilingual classrooms. Tutors decreased their pre-to-post perceived understanding, speaking and writing of English. When interpreted in tandem with the higher reading grades received by tutors, it is likely that this finding of lower perceived abilities in English is due to the tutors' increased awareness of a gap in their knowledge of English. In other words, tutors realized through the tutoring sessions that they were not as proficient in English as they previously thought.

After participating in the PVY Program, tutors had significantly higher self-concept (Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale) scores after participa-

tion. Tutors also consistently and significantly increased their scores on the Quality of School Life Scale including subscale scores on satisfaction with school, commitment to classwork and reactions to teachers.

Participant perceptions of the PVY Program were very positive with tutors reporting that improved grades were the greatest benefit. Comments from the tutors surveyed at the end of the first year include the following:

How has the tutoring program helped you?

[It has helped me] because I met some kid that I will never forget.

I respect [my family] and act more mature.

By teaching our little kids . . . we're also learning from them.

It helped me believe in myself.

It helps me understand my family.

I [now] read books [at home] from the library.

Because my mom and dad are proud of me.

My parents give me responsibility.

What have you gotten out of the tutoring program?

Love, and I got to know them [the kids].

What do you like about the tutoring program?

It is fun because it helps you stay in school all the time.

What have you gotten out of tutoring children?

I have been able to learn what I didn't learn in kindergarten.

I have learned that I am really smart.

Very, very good grades and respect, and lots of love.

I care about them [the tutees] very much.

I have gotten a great big happy . . . family.

Teacher/Coordinators had consistently higher post-test ratings for their tutors in the following areas: self-concept, discipline, interest in academics, interest in class, interest in school, clarity of goals, their relationships with parents, teachers, administrators and counselors, and desire to graduate.

Research Question 5:

Do the effects of the cross-age tutoring program on academic achievement, language proficiency, self-concept, attitude toward school, attendance and disciplinary record vary by type/quality of class attended, number/quality of tutoring sessions, number/ quality of field trips, number/quality of role models and number/quality of parent involvement sessions?

As with all educational programs, implementation of PVY varied from campus to campus and from classroom to classroom. These variations can be seen as natural variations reflecting the realities of schooling in particular contexts. Variations in terms of classes, field trips, role models, and parent involvement are described below. Over the next school year, PVY research activities will seek to do the following: (1) identify connections between program variations and program effects, and (2) identify the "essence" of the PVY, i.e., those components and/or activities/approaches which must be included in the model in order to produce positive effects.

Type and Quality of Class Attended

Site evaluations conducted by IDRA research staff indicated varied classroom situations existed in four major areas:

1. Tutor Preparation: Within the context of the tutor-tutee interaction, the tutors varied in their knowledge and use of verbal reinforcement, disciplining and questioning techniques.
2. Tutoring Techniques: The tutoring materials varied from computers to chalkboards, from the basic curriculum series to teachers' manuals.
3. Teacher Support in Classroom: Teachers varied in the degree and kind of support given to the tutors in the areas of positive reinforcement (e.g., "You really helped Anna today."), materials provided, space provided (specific tutoring table vs. crowded area), and monitoring/intervention.
4. Tutor-Tutee Assignment: Classrooms varied in the number of the tutees assigned to one tutor, the number of times tutees are changed for one tutor, the number of times tutors are moved to different classrooms and the number of special cases (e.g., tutees in special education or kindergarten classes).

Variations with regard to other PVY components are listed below.

Number and Quality of Field Trips

While the number of field trips ranged from two

to four, there were few campus differences in the rating of the trips; the majority rated the trips as either excellent or good. Eighty-seven percent of the tutors reported their desire to return.

Number and Quality of Role Models

The number of guest speakers ranged from two to four with the majority of tutors (64%) giving the speakers an excellent rating. Few campus differences were observed except in tutors' reported reasons for wanting the speaker's job. Tutors from two of the campuses cited earning power as the prevailing reason while tutors from the other two campuses cited humanitarian reasons (e.g., wanting to help others).

Number and Quality of Parent Involvement Sessions

Parent participation in training sessions has been less than expected. Non-attenders cited conflicting work schedules, transportation problems, and fear of having to participate in an English forum, despite assurances that the sessions would be bilingual.

Parent leader core groups are being organized for the purpose of increasing awareness and participation in the PVY Program. The community liaison has also begun visiting the parents' homes for the purpose of establishing communication, promoting the tutoring program and addressing concerns.

Further quantitative and qualitative research into school context variables will be conducted during the second year of implementation. These data will be used to answer two other research questions:

1. In what school context, e.g., school climate, school leadership, per pupil expenditures, and mobility and transfer rates is the cross-age tutoring program implemented at each site?
2. How do school context variables affect the implementation of the cross-tutoring program?

Findings for all seven research questions will be presented in the final report to be completed in July 1990. An implementation handbook will also be available for individuals interested in replicating this program.

For further information about the Partners For Valued Youth Project, contact Dr. María del Refugio Robledo, Project Director.

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María del Refugio Robledo, Ph.D., currently serves as the director of the Partners for Valued Youth program at IDRA. Dr. Robledo served as principal investigator of a longitudinal study of Hispanic dropouts in the Dallas ISD. She has also been principal investigator and project director of the Texas School Dropout Survey Project, the first state-wide study of dropouts in Texas. She has also served on the State Dropout Prevention Task Force. Dr. Robledo was a Visiting Scholar at the University of Houston, Mexican American Studies Program, where she studied differences in campus dropout rates in the Houston ISD, and was a project director of a JTPA-funded evaluation of Model At-Risk programs.

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Josie Danini Supik, M.A., is a research associate at IDRA. She is the coordinator of research efforts for the Partners for Valued Youth, a two-year, cross-age tutoring research and demonstration project. In this capacity she has designed surveys, developed protocols and oversees the quality control of these projects. She is also a consultant to the Dallas ISD Dropout Study, and co-authored and coordinated the compilation of the summary volume.

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